American Girl®

March/April 2002 americangirl.com $3.95

Free Photo Frames!

Quiz! Are You a Blabbermouth?

New Spring Hairstyles to Try

PLUS! Silly Pranks for April Fools' Day!

Make Our Tiniest Craft Ever!

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Plus: AG Photo Frames

See AG online!

Visit **americangirl.com** to peek behind the scenes of AG magazine! Always get a parent's permission before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.

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Make the tiniest craft you've ever seen!

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Joy Ride
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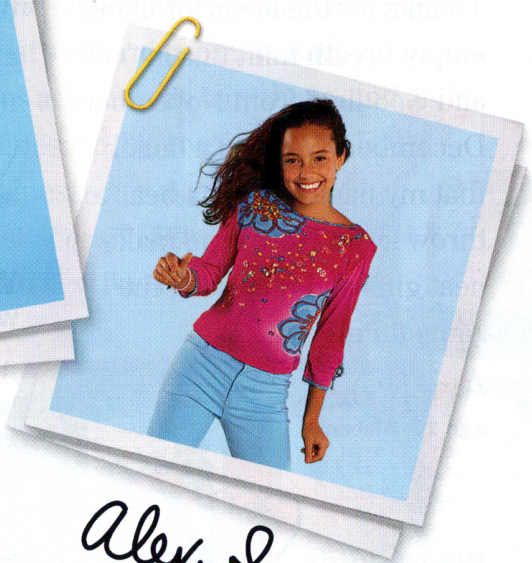
Is It O.K. to Tell?
You're not a blabbermouth—or are you? Take our quiz!

About the Cover
Meet Alex S., age 11. From pink tees to daisy capris, Alex tried on a bunch of flowery fashions at our photo shoot. Which of these outfits is *your* favorite? Go to **americangirl.com** to vote for the one you like best!



Alex S.

Spring Styles
Give your hair a new twist for spring!

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Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

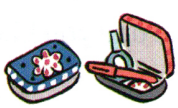
Cover photo: Monica Skeisvoll Cover illustration: Carol Yoshizumi

Letters from You

Dancing Wheels

The article "Dancing Dreams" in your November/December 2001 magazine was very special to me and my family. My baby sister also has spina bifida. It was really neat to read about how girls with spina bifida can dance using their wheelchairs. I'm going to save this article for my sister to read when she's older (she's only nine weeks old now!).

Emma W. :-)
Age 10, Michigan



Tin Grin

Thanks for the ideas for using empty breath mint tins in "Gifts and Goodies" from November/December. We have a bunch that my nana just can't bear to throw away. Now I can make neat gifts and recycle at the same time!

Ariel :-)
Age 10, Alabama

Wise Words

In your November/December issue, "Heart to Heart" was very touching. I had a hard week, and when I sat down and read those encouraging words, they really helped me feel better. Thanks!

Carrie M. :-)
Age 12, Connecticut

Fears Disappear

Recently, I was in a school play, and the day of the performance, I was very nervous. When I got home from school, I read your November/December issue. The answer to "Stage Fright" in "Help!" inspired me. I made copies of it and handed them out to the other actors. We had a great show that night thanks to you!

Jackie A.
Age 11, Illinois

Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

AmericanGirl
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to im_agmag_editor@pleasantco.com.

No matter how you write us, be sure to include your full name and birth date. We can't use every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

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AmericanGirl®

Girls Express

Buzzword

American girls everywhere will be using this buzzword this season:

intrepid

How to say it: in-TREP-id

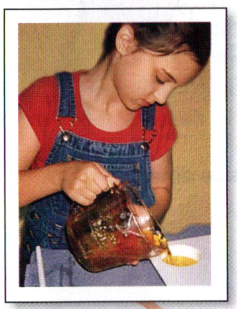
What it means: bold and fearless

Where it comes from: The word *intrepid* comes from the Latin words *in* + *trepidus*, which mean "to not tremble."

One way to use it: "Maddie was an intrepid hiker who never let any obstacles stand in her way."

The buzzword is tucked somewhere into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? Answer is on page 44.

Bright Idea



Rachel D. never has to search for a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow—she makes it herself! "Pot o' Gold," a shimmery powder made with sparkly gold mica, is just one of Rachel's products. The Louisiana girl also makes Rainbow Soap, a bright bar layered with yummy flavors like Lovely Lime and Cheery Cherry. Rachel named her business Wild Child Soaps after her nickname. "My family called me Wild Child when I was little," explains Rachel, age nine. "I could never stop moving!"

Now, it's Rachel's business that's off and running. Rachel shows off her lotions and potions at craft fairs, gift shops, and "soap parties" in customers' homes. So far, she's made $2,500!

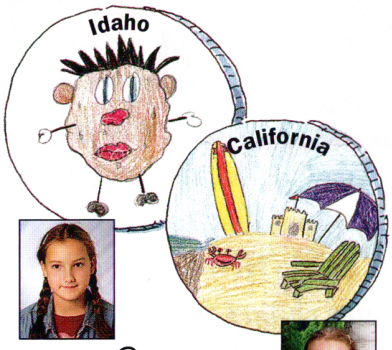
Rachel's been in the soap business for two years, but she's still bubbling with fresh ideas. "Right now," she says, "I'm working on a new line of bath stuff—for boys!"

Learn how to make Rachel's Rainbow Bath Salts at americangirl.com!

Photo: James H. Young. Illustrations: Paul Meisel

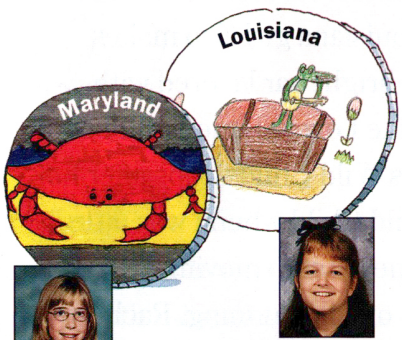
Funny Money

State quarters for Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, and Mississippi all roll out this year. But we bet you won't see *these* clever coins anywhere but here!



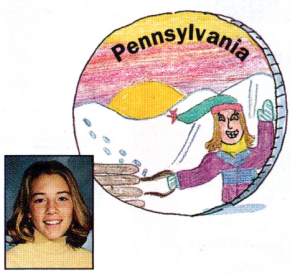
Julie B.
Age 11, Massachusetts

Briana W.
Age 13, California



Krista M.
Age 10, Louisiana

Lindsey S.
Age 11, Maryland

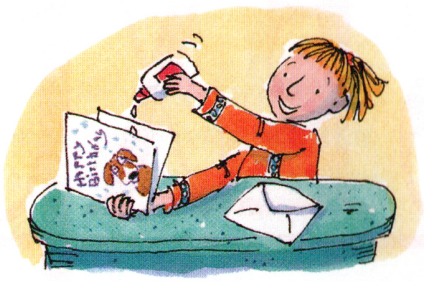


Julie K.
Age 13, Pennsylvania

See page 35 for more money fun!

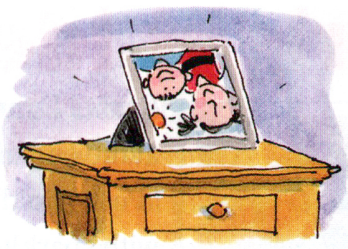
Just Foolin'!

Try these quick tricks on April 1.



Glue a greeting card shut, then give it to a friend.

Serve a wacky breakfast: pour Pop Rocks on cereal, put food coloring in milk, or add 7 UP to orange juice.



Turn photos upside down in their frames.

Lace your sister's running shoes from top to bottom. Then start running before she catches you!

Fancy Feet

For Emily M., age 11, of Illinois, St. Patrick's Day means parades, performances—and tired feet! Emily's a competitive Irish dancer. Here's a quick guide to her flying feet:

Sleeping on 100 sponge rollers gives Emily's hair that "oodles of noodles" look. When time is short, she jigs in wigs.

A dancer's arms must be stiff and straight. "One of the hardest things is keeping your arms still," says Emily, "especially when you're leaping high!" To practice, some beginners dance with small books under their arms.

Emily wears her school's traditional dress. She hopes someday to earn the "solo dress"—a fancy costume she'll get to design herself.

Emily wears soft-soled shoes called *gillies* (GIL-eez). A good dancer never looks at her feet!

Sweet Tweet

Make a pretty treat to eat.

1 Wash hands. Crumble 1 cup shredded wheat cereal (large or small biscuits) into a large bowl.

2 Ask an adult to help you melt 1 tablespoon butter in a saucepan over low heat. Stir in 1 cup mini marshmallows and 1 tablespoon peanut butter. Cook until mixture is melted and syrupy, stirring constantly.

3 Ask an adult to help you pour the marshmallow mixture over the cereal. Mix with a spoon to coat evenly.

4 Let mixture cool until it is warm (but not hot!). Smear butter on your hands. Form mixture into 4 balls. Shape into nests. Let nests cool completely, and fill with candy eggs.

Photo: James H. Young Cadbury's Mini Eggs courtesy of Hershey's True Story photos courtesy of Nabisco

True Story

Kirston wins a concert—no strings attached.

Dear American Girl,

Last year, I read about a contest by Nabisco. The winner would get an *NSYNC concert at his or her school. I filled out the form and sent it in. Later, I got a letter saying I'd won. At first I ran around the house, screaming!

The hard part was keeping it a secret. Whenever my friends talked about *NSYNC, I'd change the subject. Finally, about a month before the concert, our principal announced it during an assembly. Everyone screamed! Some kids thanked me for winning—they'd entered the contest, too.

The concert was on March 30, my mom's birthday. My whole family got front-row seats. First I went backstage and met the guys. JC asked me how I was doing, and Chris and Justin told me a joke. Then I introduced them to the school. They sang for an hour, and they did my favorite songs—"It's Gonna Be Me" and "Bye Bye Bye." But the best part was when they sang "Happy Birthday" to my mom!

Sincerely,

Kirston B.

Age 14, California

AG POLL

Your answers:

In our November/December 2001 issue, we asked you if gel pens were allowed in your school. Here's what you said:

YES: 616
NO: 199

Most of you would hate to have gel pens banned. As Kayla M., age 12, of Missouri says, "Gel pens help me express myself!"

Next question:

Imagine there was a Mt. Rushmore for girls and women. Whose face would you want on it? Would you show your favorite movie star, a famous singer, or someone from history? List below the girls or women you would pick. Then tell us why you chose them.

Cut out your answer and mail it to us with your full name, address, and birth date.

Give 'Em a Hand!

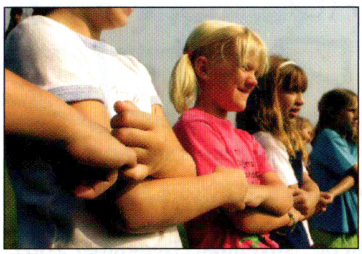


Photo: Suburban News Publications, © 2001

Last fall, 700 students in Ohio proved they're not the weakest link—they tried forming the world's largest pinkie chain! The students earned a U.S. record from Guinness World Records. Allison M., age 8 (shown above in the red shirt), says, "My fingers got tired!"

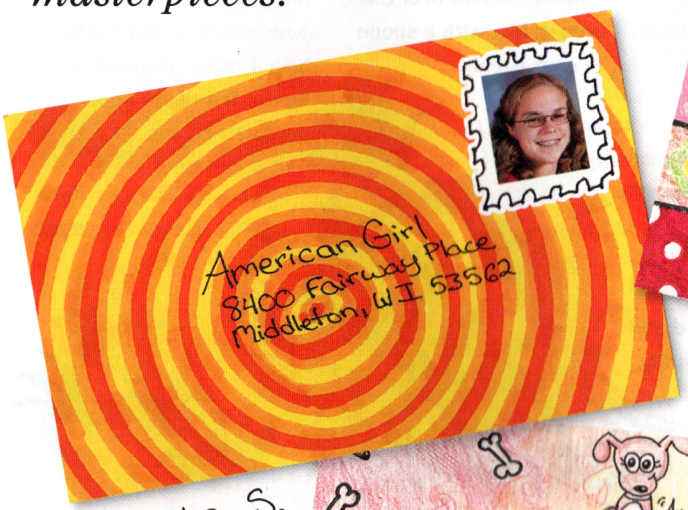
Cut out your answer and mail it to us.

Help Wanted!

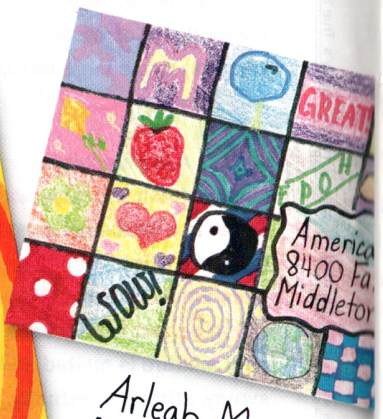
Take Our Daughters to Work Day is April 25, and we want to hear your stories! Did you help your dad design roller coasters? Did you go with your mom to the vet clinic? Tell us how you spent the day. Send your letter to the address on page 2 with your full name, address, and birth date.

Envelope Contest

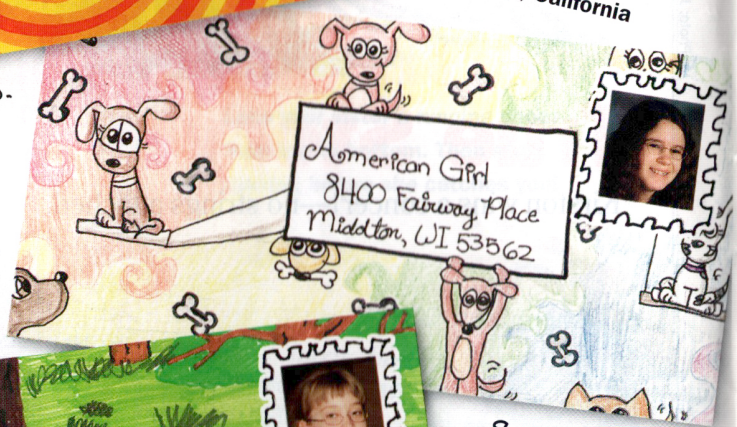
More than 2,000 of you entered our envelope-decorating contest. Check out these mailbox masterpieces!



Christa S.
Age 14, Illinois



Arleah M.
Age 12, California



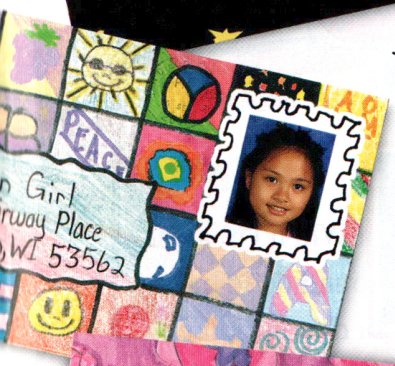
Elizabeth S.
Age 12, Arkansas

Erin G.
Age 13, New Jersey

Maureen P.
Age 10, New Jersey

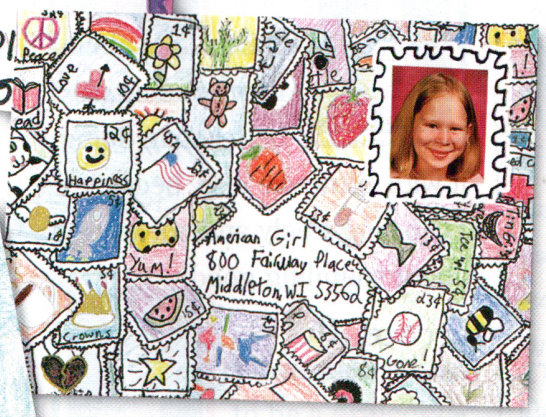
Ashley O.
Age 12, New York

Eva K.
Age 13, Virginia



Hannah K.
Age 10, Florida

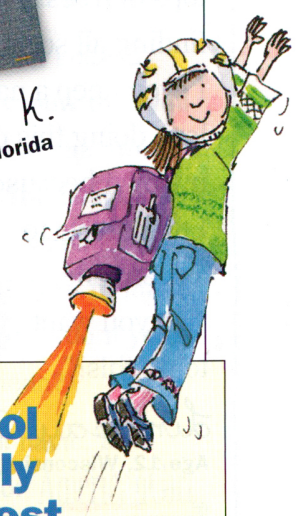
Megan Q.
Age 11, Washington



Monica S.
Age 14, Illinois

Emily S.
Age 12, Maine

Chelsey M.
Age 13, Texas

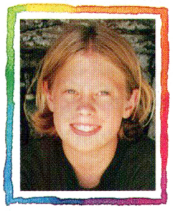


School Supply Contest

Invent a cool school tool! Is it a flying backpack? A pen that changes color when you write a wrong answer? A locker that expands into a private dressing room? Draw your dream school supply, tell us what it does, and send it to the address on page 2 with your full name, address, and birth date. Deadline: April 15, 2002. Winners will appear in our September/October 2002 issue.

Fun for One

What's your favorite thing to do when you're by yourself? Why is it better than doing it with a friend?



I love nature, every part of it. I explore from the tops of trees to beneath the dirt, finding all sorts of creatures. I even keep a nature journal. I love doing this on my own because I don't have to ask anyone, "Do you want to do this?"

Lindsay C.
Age 12, Wisconsin

I used to feel very lonely after school when nobody was home. Then I started writing funny stories and poems while listening to cheerful musicals, like *Oliver* or *My Fair Lady.* Now I have fun spending time by myself.

Joy B.
Age 11, Pennsylvania

My favorite thing to do alone is dance. It keeps me active so I don't get bored. It's also a fun workout.

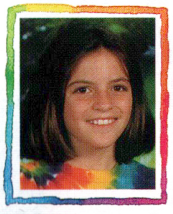
Jewel G.
Age 14, California

When I am alone, I love to sing. It's better than doing it with someone else, because I can sing freely and not worry about sounding good.

Grace M.
Age 10, Massachusetts

I have a passion for drawing, but I can only do it when I'm by myself. Otherwise I can't concentrate, and my drawings don't turn out well.

Kelly M.
Age 11, Massachusetts



When I'm alone and don't have chores, I like to make my own snacks or make surprises for my parents, like cards and awards. Friends don't always understand or want to do what I want to do, so sometimes I like to be by myself. Being alone is like being free.

Katie S.
Age 10, Pennsylvania

I love practicing gymnastics by myself. When I have friends around, I always have to do everything right. When I am alone, I can mess up and do my thing with no one there to see me!

Vanessa R.
Age 11, California

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

I like watching movies on tape when I'm home alone, because if I'm with friends, sometimes they make noise or wiggle too much.

Alyssa R.
Age 10, Michigan

I sit in front of my mirror and play with my parakeet when I'm by myself. It's fun having time alone because I feel like I'm in my own little corner where no one is bothering me. It gives me time to be away from the fast-paced life I have, and it gets me in a better mood!

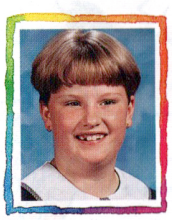
Stephanie C.
Age 11, Alabama

Writing in a diary is something every girl should be able to do alone. It makes me feel like I can be free about my secrets. It's a time to set aside to think about things I don't want the world to know.

Traci J.
Age 12, Virginia

Whenever I'm alone, I like to read. I go into my room, and the book seems to stand up with open arms and say, "Read me, read me!" When I open it, I'm locked in the story for hours. While I'm reading, I feel content, because the characters keep me company.

Molly C.
Age 10, Colorado



When I do homework, I like to be alone. I think it's just easier to focus and get it done right.

Jenna F.
Age 10, Illinois

I love pretending to be a princess or a WNBA star when I'm alone. Playing a game like that would never work with friends, because we all have different imaginations. But when I'm just by myself, well…that's a different story.

Kara S.
Age 11, Ohio

If you're all by yourself, don't mope around! Do a craft, invent a smoothie, talk to a friend on the phone, write to a pen pal, or organize your room. Then you'll be A.B.N.L. (alone but not lonely)!

Francesca H.
Age 11, California

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: School smarts. What do you know now that you wish you'd known at the start of the school year? The best way to remember a lock combination? A super study tip? How to make new friends? What to do if your teacher seems mean?

Send answers, full name, birth date, and photo to: AmericanGirl 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562.

Deadline: April 7, 2002. Some answers will appear in the September/October 2002 issue. ★

DON'T FOOLED!

by Marissa Moss
(and gotcha! Amelia)

WATCH OUT FOR THESE MOLDY OLDIES!

March 31

I'm all set for April Fools' tomorrow. I hid a whoopee cushion under the seat of Cleo's chair so that she'll have a nice surprise at breakfast. And for Mom, I set her alarm clock to go off a half hour earlier. Then I checked my room for any possible Cleo traps – all clear!

↑ the dangling rubber spider

April 1

No one liked my morning jokes. Mom was extra-grouchy (who thought thirty minutes of sleep would matter?).

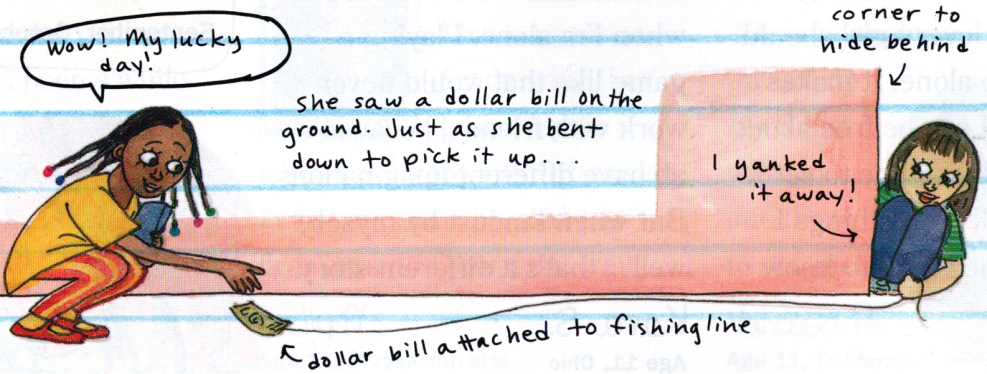
P.U.! Cleo, did you HAVE to? And while we're eating?
Very funny, Amelia. Hardy har har.
Cleo didn't appreciate my joke, but I thought it was hilarious!
ACME

↑ the dribble glass

Ptoo!

↑ the squirting nickel

Then at school, I played a great joke on Carly.


Wow! My lucky day!
she saw a dollar bill on the ground. Just as she bent down to pick it up...
corner to hide behind
I yanked it away!
dollar bill attached to fishing line

↑ the innocent-looking, but super-hot candy

KICK ME ← the stupid sign stuck on someone's back

She thought it was such a good trick, she wanted to try it.

TRICKS I'VE FALLEN FOR (DON'T FALL FOR THEM YOURSELF!) ↓

So I let Carly have the money after all (no yanking away this time). I don't need a prop to play a trick anyway. At lunch, I told Leah she had mayonnaise on her face.

↑ gum that turns teeth black (SMILE!)

↑ bug in plastic ice cube

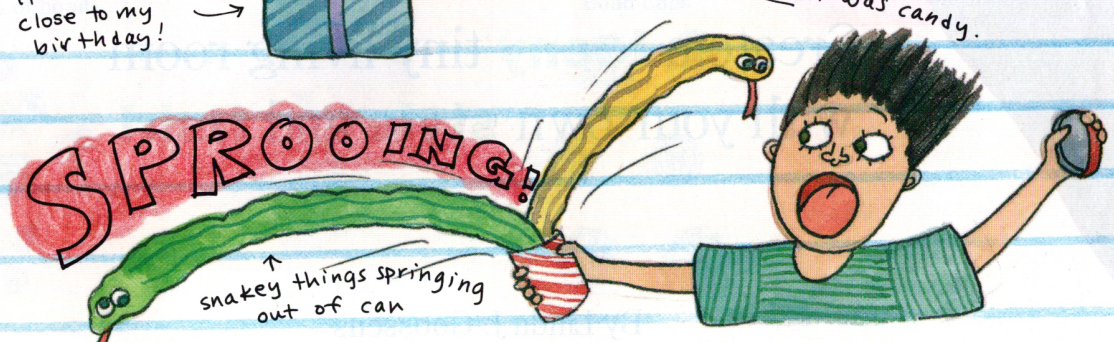
Finally I said "April Fool! There's NOTHING there!" Leah burst out laughing. "I was sure there was," she said, "because you have a glob of mustard on your face." I thought she was trying my own joke back on me, but it was true.

When I got home, there was a package for me — from Nadia!

↑ rubber pencil

How sweet of her! It wasn't even close to my birthday! →

← I opened it and inside was a tin of candy. At least, I thought it was candy.

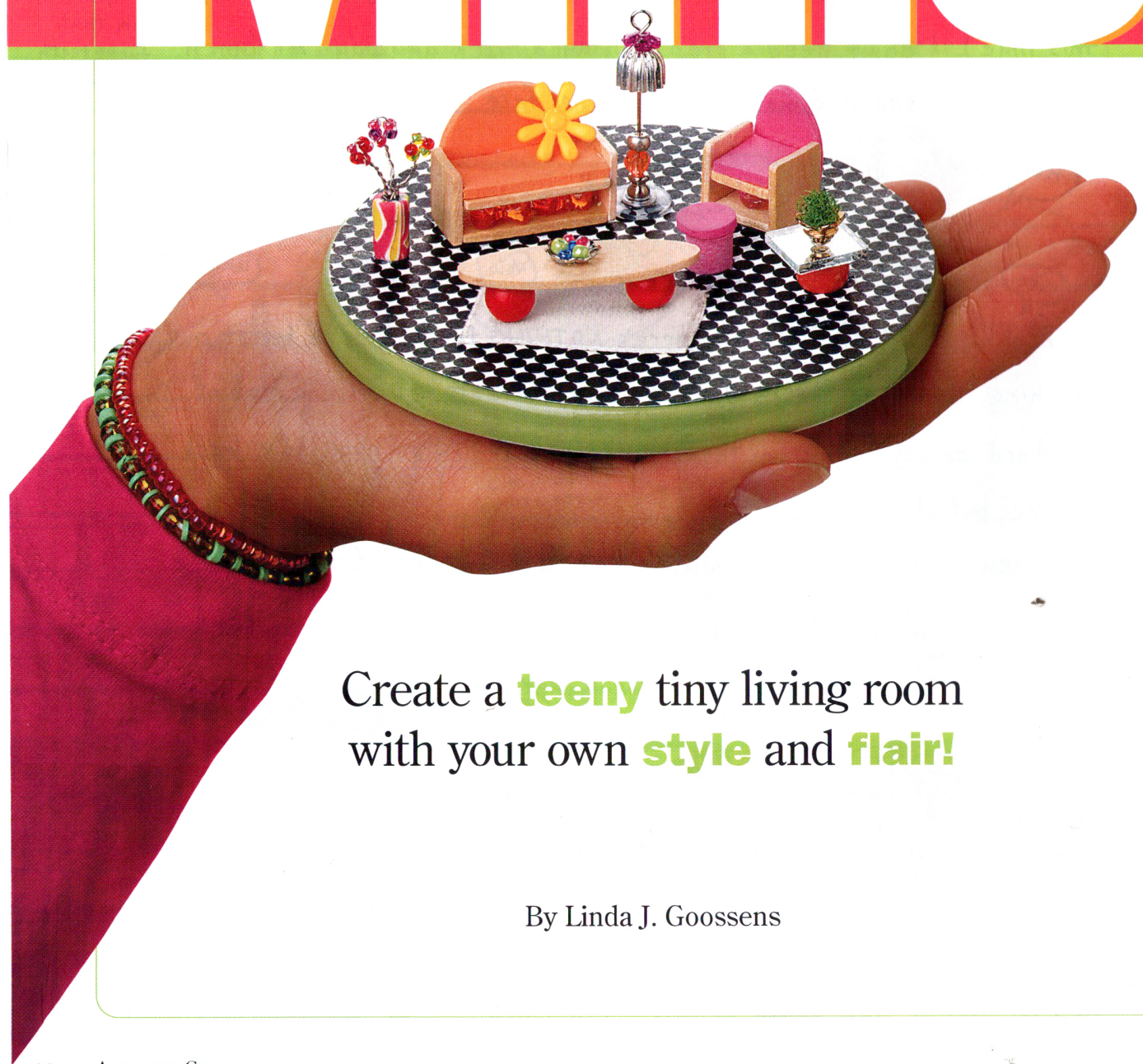


First I was startled, then I laughed. Hmmm, I wonder if Cleo would like some candy. "Oh, Cleo..." ★

Amelia's full of surprises! Visit americangirl.com to take her quizzes, play games, and more.

Craft

Micro Minis



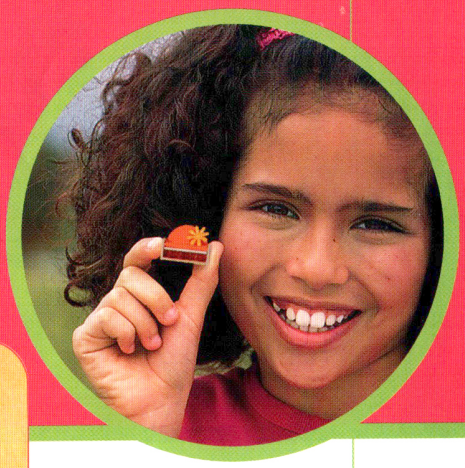
Create a **teeny** tiny living room with your own **style** and **flair!**

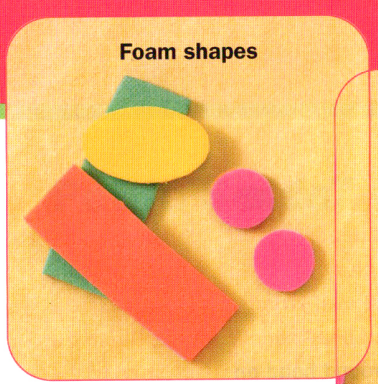
By Linda J. Goossens

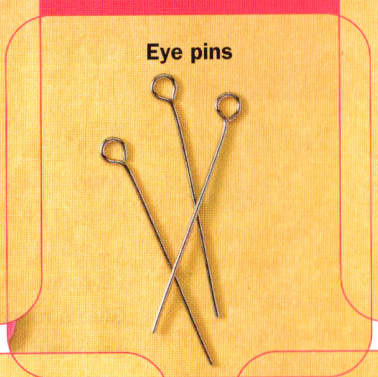
Photos: Mike McKenzie/Hot Shots, Alain Redder

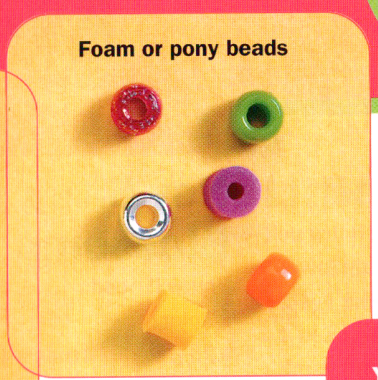
Mini Materials

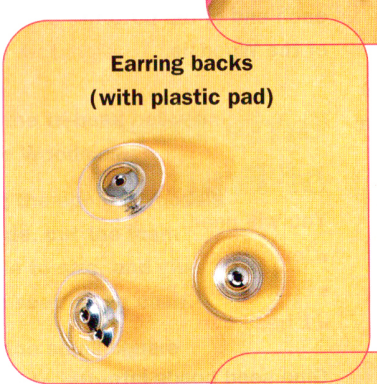
Since some of these items are sold in large quantities, go in on them with a friend! Here are the special supplies (found at craft stores) you will need to make tiny furniture.

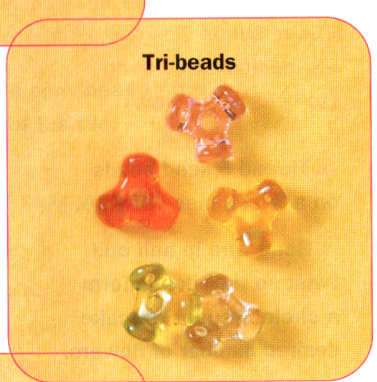


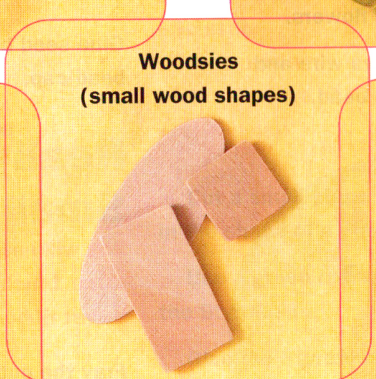


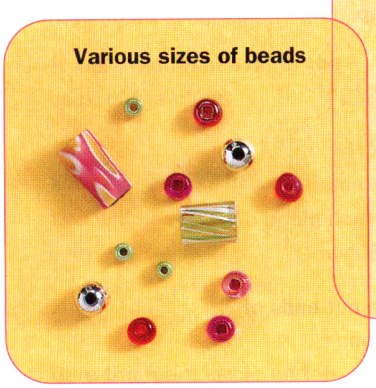












You will also need these items:

- Jewel glue
- Scissors
- Wire cutter
- Ruler
- Velvet ribbon
- Styrofoam
- Green marker
- 28-gauge wire
- Mirror mosaic tiles (optional)
- Patterned paper (for a funky floor)

Small Sofa

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- Scissors
- 2 small square Woodsies
- 2 small rectangular Woodsies
- 2 tri-beads
- 1 large foam circle
- 1 foam rectangle

1 Glue 2 tri-beads to the middle of one rectangular Woodsie. Glue the other rectangular Woodsie to the top of the beads.

2 Using the rectangular Woodsie as a guide, cut the foam rectangle to size, and glue it to the seat of the sofa.

3 Glue the small square Woodsies to either side of the rectangular Woodsies.

4 Cut a straight edge off the foam circle, and glue the foam to the back of the sofa.

Itsy-Bitsy Blossoms

You will need:

- Ruler
- 28-gauge wire
- Wire cutter
- Seed beads
- 1 medium-sized bead (to hold the flowers)

1 Thread 5 seed beads on a 3-inch piece of wire.

2 Bend wire in half and twist so that beads form a circle. Repeat to make desired number of flowers.

3 Cut or bend extra wire and arrange flowers in bead.

Tiny Table

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- 1 small oval Woodsie
- 2 round beads

Glue a round bead on each end of the bottom of the Woodsie.

Bitty Bowl of Fruit

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- Fruit-colored seed beads
- 1 bead cap

Glue seed beads into bead cap.

Really Small Rug

You will need:

- One 1-inch piece of velvet ribbon

Fray the cut ends of the ribbon.

Petite Seat

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- Scissors
- 4 small square Woodsies
- 1 tri-bead
- 1 foam oval
- 1 foam rectangle

1 Glue the tri-bead between 2 square Woodsies.

2 Using the square Woodsie as a guide, cut the foam rectangle to size, and glue it to the seat of the chair.

3 Glue the small square Woodsies to either side of the square Woodsies.

4 Glue the foam oval to the back of the chair.

Fun Footstool

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- 1 foam or pony bead
- 1 small foam circle

Glue the foam circle on top of the foam or pony bead.

Itty End Table

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- 1 small square mosaic tile (or square Woodsie)
- 1 pony bead

Glue the pony bead to the middle of the tile.

Peewee Plant

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- Scissors
- Green marker
- 1 small piece of Styrofoam
- 1 bead cap

1 Cut a small piece of Styrofoam in the shape of a plant.

2 Use a green marker to color the Styrofoam.

3 Glue the Styrofoam inside the bead cap.

Little Lamp

You will need:

- Jewel glue
- 1 eye pin
- 1 bead cap
- Small beads
- Earring back (with plastic pad)

1 Thread the bead cap on the eye pin. Glue to secure at top. Let dry.

2 Add beads to the eye pin.

3 Place the tip of the eye pin into the top of the earring back.

Micro Minis Tips:

- If you don't want to purchase all of the supplies, substitute thin cardboard (like a cereal box) for the small wood shapes. Cut the cardboard to size, paint it, and turn it into little furniture!
- Be creative! Look around the house for tiny objects that will look cute in your room. For example, tiny buttons make great throw pillows!
- Invite a few friends over and have a micro minis party!

Contest Winner

Last summer, we invited you to write a story that included these three things: an open diary, a newspaper with an article clipped out, and a sink full of dirty dishes.

More than 2,800 of you did! From all of your entries, we picked this winning story.

Mi Familia

BY TERESA C.

Illustrations: Peter Reynolds

Nenny's family reunion means one thing: complete chaos!
Nenny just wants some peace and quiet.
Will she survive a crowded cabin filled with her crazy family?

I remember the year I turned nine. It was the year I got my braces (my sister Lola got them that year, too). It was also the year I got my glasses. And it was the year I learned to hate—and love—mi familia (my family) during a reunion that spring at Convict Lake.

Only some of my family was at the lake at first—me, Mamá, Pop, Lola, my brothers Ramón and Pépe, my grandmother (whom we called Abuela), Tía (aunt) Alina, and Tío (uncle) Carlos. We stayed up late—Tía Alina slipped me and Lola squares of caramel under the table, which was cool because we weren't allowed to have that stuff, many thanks to our braces. Tío Carlos tickled Ramón and Pépe with his long, long toes. It was a fun evening.

But around one in the morning, there was a big bang on the door. Mamá opened it, and it was my great-aunt, Tía Lupe, and her husband, Tío Felipe.

"Why, hello!" Tía Lupe said, squeezing Mamá so hard I thought she'd break her ribs. "And how's my favorite niece?!"

Mamá said, "I'm fine, Tía Lupe."

"What a ride!" Lupe roared, making her voice sound like the engine of her Ford Explorer. "Felipe drove!"

Mamá said, "I thought Felipe was blind in his left eye!"

Tía Lupe bellowed again. "He is! Like a roller coaster, I tell you!"

We invited them inside, and Abuela began to talk in rapid Spanish with Lupe, happy to see her sister once more. Alina went over to the stove and brewed some herbal tea that smelled like lemon

slices dipped in tar. She didn't say anything—she never says anything, except to her dogs at home. We were just about settled down again and ready to go to bed when there was another rap on the door. There was Tío Tomasito and Tía Consuela.

"Why, hello!" cried Tía Lupe, racing toward Consuela. "And how's my favorite niece?" Tía Consuela smiled but didn't say anything, and Tío Tomasito just spat out a sunflower seed. Tía Alina bent down and cleaned it up with a dishrag. The floor was almost clean again when my cousins Pablo and Raffa barged in with a war cry and their muddy feet and squirt guns. Little cousin Marisol staggered in after them with two bottles of wine so big that they could have held the whole lake.

"Somebody help me!" Marisol said with a whistle. She always whistled when she talked because her front baby tooth fell out and she wanted to show it off. Then she dropped both wine bottles.

"Oops!" Marisol exclaimed. Mamá began to help poor Tía Alina clean.

"Why, hello!" I heard Tía Lupe say. "And how's my favorite great-niece?"

I spun around. People were now pouring in through the back door, too. Carmen was walking in with her pink bicycle with Uncle Bob (he's not American like us—English, I think, because he likes to drive on the wrong side of the road). Isabella was smacking her lips as she blew pink bubbles with her gum. They were everywhere! Everywhere! Relatives everywhere!

"Ouch!" I yelled as I turned around. A little boy stood behind me, his face split in an angelic grin with three of his pudgy fingers stuffed shyly in his mouth. I smiled back at him. He turned his head away bashfully, waddled backward, then gave a bloodcurdling scream, rushed back at me again at full speed, and kicked me a second time.

"Stop!" I cried.

"Nenny!" Lola hissed. "Play dead and Mateo will leave you alone!"

"What?" I asked.

Mateo took his fingers out of his mouth and grabbed fistfuls of my hair.

"Do it, Nenny!"

I let my eyes roll up and fell over. Mateo looked at me, giggled, and began to hit Tía Alina, who was cleaning up something else.

And through all the noise, I heard Mamá yelling at Tía Lupe. "Everyone in one house! Why?" she screamed. "Why did you cancel everyone else's cabin reservations?"

"I wanted some quality family time," was all she said.

The next night, Tía Lupe christened me "Best Dishwasher in America." Don't ask me why when there were 20 other cousins there to pick on. She said it was good for me. Mamá was too busy to object, trying to keep Pépe from burning down the cabin. So I washed, thinking, *I don't know if I'd call this "quality family time."* The plates, the glasses, the forks and spoons—the sinkful of dishes from breakfast, lunch, and dinner was piled high. And it wasn't just dishes that people put in the sink, either—Ramón and

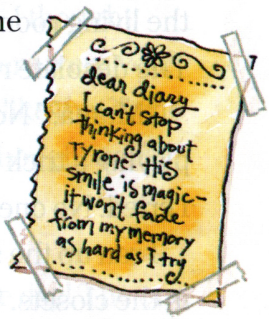
Marisol thought it was funny to bury weird things in the soap suds for me to find. Many times I needed to perform CPR on sodden action figures and limp, drowned worms. I even found an entire issue of *The New York Times* in there, minus the front page article about heaven knows what. The ink dyed the water gray.

The noise was deafening. It was as if my family was setting off firecrackers in the living room. Abuela and the aunts played cards. Lupe shouted in Spanish at nearby family members to distract the other players, so that she could cheat without them noticing.

Tomasito just sat outside in his creaking old chair, spitting away, watching Carmen ride her pink bicycle around the deck in circles. As she pedaled around, she sang: "I'm going to Kentucky, I'm going to the fair! To see the señorita with a flower in her hair!"

I JUST STOOD THERE AT THE SINK, WISHING I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A FAMILY.

Carmen's a very good singer, but as soon as Marisol started whistling along through her missing tooth, it all got a little hard to handle. Pablo, Raffa, Pépe, and Ramón had water guns and squirted water everywhere—through the screens on the windows or at anyone who dared approach the cabin. Carmen got hold of Isabella's diary and left it open on the table for all to see. Then the boys got it, ripped out the pages, and posted them in all the rooms.



For some reason, Mateo liked to kick at my ankles as I washed the dishes. I tried to talk to him about it.

"Mateo," I said in a very calm, serious voice, holding his hands in mine and staring at him steadily. "I do not like it when you hurt me. It makes me sad." His smile faded. He truly looked sorry. "Do you understand?" I asked. Lip out in a sorrowful way, he nodded. "Now," I said, "what would you like to say to me?"

"AAAAAAARGH!" he screamed as loud as he could as he attacked.

In the next room, Tío Carlos and Uncle Bob were announcing something about renting a boat, but I couldn't really listen because Marisol had broken something again and Lola was yelling at her as Tía Alina cleaned it up. I just stood there at the sink, glasses fogged and fingertips like raisins, wishing I didn't even have a family.

The next morning started out like any other one—all the Cheerios spilled onto the floor for Tía Alina to take care of, and Mateo punched me, as usual. After I cleaned all the breakfast dishes, I went to the bathroom to braid my hair. I took my time, humming to myself and painstakingly brushing out every single tangle, then braiding in a bright green ribbon for a fancy touch. "O.K., Mamá!" I called cheerfully, opening the door. "I'm ready to go—"

Where was everybody?

It was quiet—too quiet. I stared at the kitchen, the living room, and the dining room in disbelief. The desolate rooms stared back.

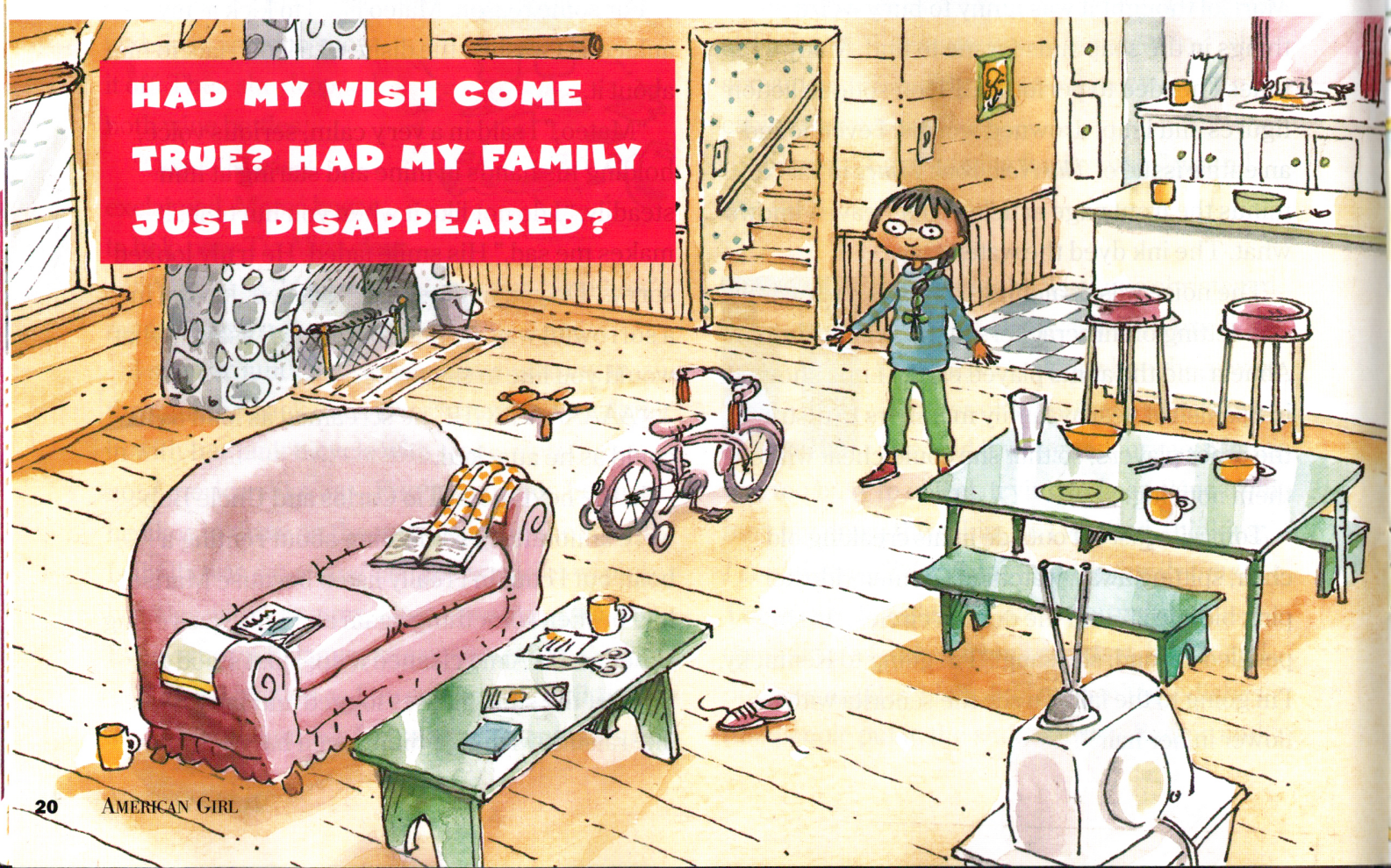
"Mamá?" No one answered. Maybe they were playing a trick on me. "This isn't funny, you guys!" I cried. No one answered.

I ran up the stairs and checked under the beds, in the closets. "Hello?" I yelled.

"Hello?" my echo replied. I jumped. I had never heard an echo before because there had always been too many people around for the sound to bounce off the walls.

Had my wish come true? Had my family just disappeared? Yes!

First I sat on the couch, just enjoying the quiet. Then I finished reading all my books. I switched on the TV and watched "Sesame Street." When that was over, I read some of Isabella's diary entries that the boys had posted on the walls (who was Tyrone?). After that, I leafed through a pamphlet that had been left on the table by the people who ran the resort. It told the story of Convict Lake, the twisted tale of six desperate criminals who escaped from prison in the dead of night and camped out at the lake. One convict was never found. This is not the sort of thing a nine-year-old should be reading about, especially when she is all alone at Convict Lake and doesn't know where her family is.



I began to get scared. Where had everyone gone? Had the convicts gotten them? Was I next? The fact that this jailbreak had occurred in 1871 did not stifle my fears. My stomach started hurting, so I thought I'd been poisoned, but I realized I was just hungry. I ate from the box of Cheerios that had been left out from breakfast.

Hours passed. Noon came. Noon went. Suddenly, people were yelling and screaming outside, but I couldn't understand what they were saying. I closed all the windows and pulled down the blinds, but that didn't block out the police sirens and the barking dogs. I sat on the couch feeling very lonely and scared.

As the noise outside grew louder, the legend of the convicts kept popping into my head like a jack-in-the-box. I'd shove those images down, only for them to be replaced with the theme song from "Sesame Street," which was getting annoying. My terror had melded everything together until I was convinced that the convicts and Big Bird were riding in a police car together, looking for me.

A key clicked in the lock. I jumped. The doorknob turned. My stomach pretzeled up. I couldn't move. Someone or something was coming—and trying to get in!

I screamed. Mamá screamed back, "Nenny!" And she began to cry into Tía Lupe's smooth sweater.

"My favorite great-niece!" Tía Lupe exclaimed.

Mateo, Isabella, and Uncle Bob were staring at me with the widest eyes I'd ever seen.

"Hi," I said.

They all shrieked and began to bury me in hugs and kisses and blessings in Spanish. I thought that Mamá would never let go. "Where were you? How could you just have walked off like that?" she demanded. "Where were you? We thought you'd drowned! Fallen off the boat!"

"What boat?" I asked.

"The one Carlos rented out for the day! The one we all rode in!"

"I never rode in a boat. I'd like to, though. Can I?"

Mamá stopped her crying. She stood back and held me by the shoulders, melting eyes staring into mine. "You never rode on the boat?" she asked as steadily as she could.

"I was doing my hair in the bathroom, and I came out and everyone was gone." Mamá's jaw nearly dropped through the floor, so I kept going. "And then I read some of Isabella's diary. Who is Tyrone?"

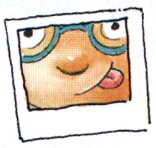
"I don't know, Nenny," Uncle Bob said, glaring at Isabella. "Who *is* Tyrone?"

Mamá turned to Lupe. "We forgot her," she whispered.

Tía Lupe was silent for a while. Then she threw up her hands to the sky. "Give it up to baby Jesus, sobrinita!" she cried. She always says that when someone should just forget about something. "It's

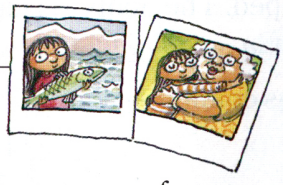
all over now! I'll go tell the police that we found her."

And that night, as I washed the dishes, the noise was like music, and the kicks from Mateo were like a massage. And later, while I drank hot cocoa on the sofa, Tío Carlos tickled me with those long, long toes. The next day, most everything was back to normal, all crazy again. But it was better to be crazy with a bunch of people who loved me than it was to be crazy all alone. ★



Meet the Author

Teresa C.



My family has a huge reunion like this one every few years, but fortunately, I've never been left behind on any adventures. And there's no Tía Alina in our family—we're all responsible for our own messes!

Teresa, age 14, lives in California.

Teresa was a story contest winner last year, too! We couldn't resist this fun story, especially since our contest rules never state that past winners can't enter again.

Honorable mentions go to:

Sara Jo C.
Age 14, Idaho

Alison T.
Age 11, Florida

Elizabeth J.
Age 12, Alaska

Jeannie R.
Age 14, Georgia

It's Your Turn!

It's time for another story contest! Here are the rules:

1. **Somewhere in your story, you must use this sentence: It wasn't supposed to happen this way.**

Give your story a winter or holiday setting. All characters in your story must be original creations.

2. **Include your full name, address, phone number, and birth date. A parent must sign your story, stating that you made it up.**

3. **Your story should be no longer than eight handwritten pages or three typed pages.**

4. **Mail your story by April 15, 2002, to the address on page 2. The winners will appear in the November/December 2002 issue.**

Tricky Pix

Fool your friends with funny photos on April 1st—and all year long!

Getting Started

You'll need a no-flash disposable camera and a few friends to create these illusions.

TIPS

- For the best results, shoot your trick pictures outside.
- Pay attention to lighting. Watch out for weird shadows and squinting models. Overcast days work well.
- Pay attention to the background. A cluttered background makes it hard to see the illusions.

STRETCH

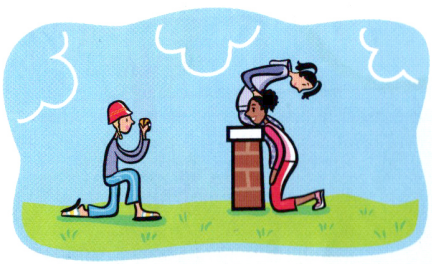
- Use models who are about the same height.
- Ask your models to wear the same color shirts.

Look Out Below!

- Find a brick or cobblestone driveway or patio for your model to "climb." If you're in a driveway, watch out for cars.
- For best results, stand on a stepladder when you shoot this photo. Ask a friend to help you keep your balance.

Have You Lost Your Head?!!

- Tell your "body" model to wear a hooded sweatshirt or a shirt with a collar. Once she's sitting on the wall, tell her to lean her head over as far as possible.
- Tell your "head" model to wear a T-shirt. She should crouch down low to hide all of her body behind the wall.
- To get the best results, position your camera at the height of the top of the wall when you shoot this picture.

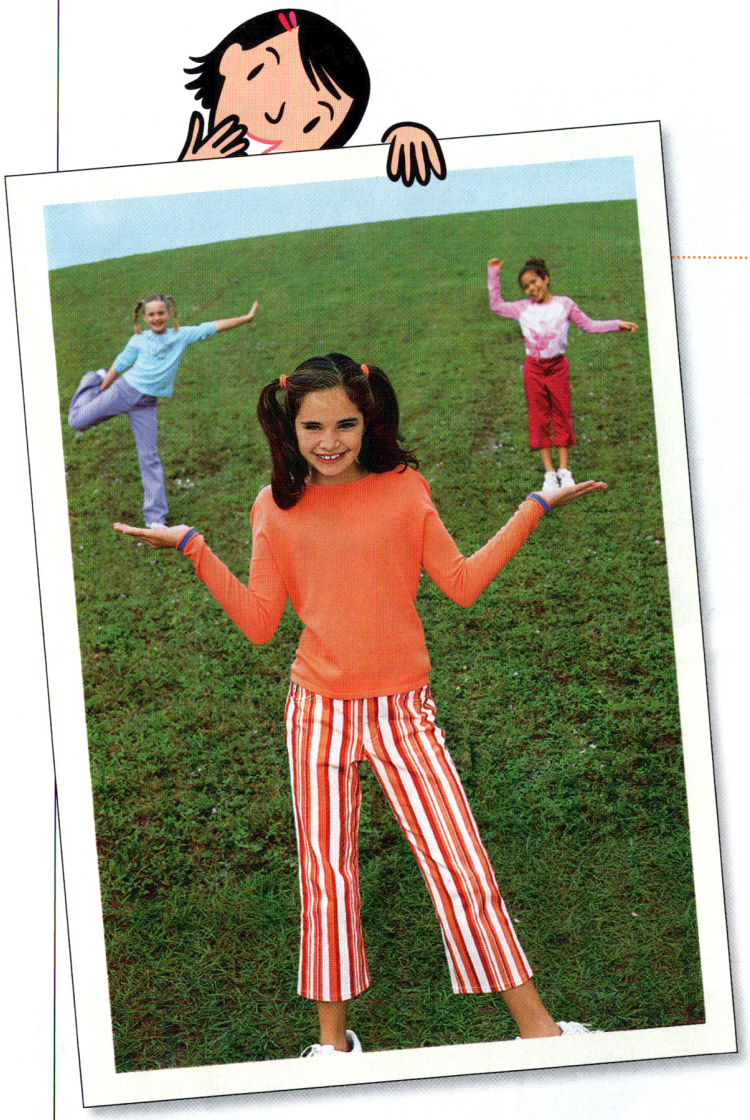


Lend a Hand

- For this trick, use two models wearing the same color shirts, standing one behind the other.
- Try this trick with two or more people wearing the same color pants.

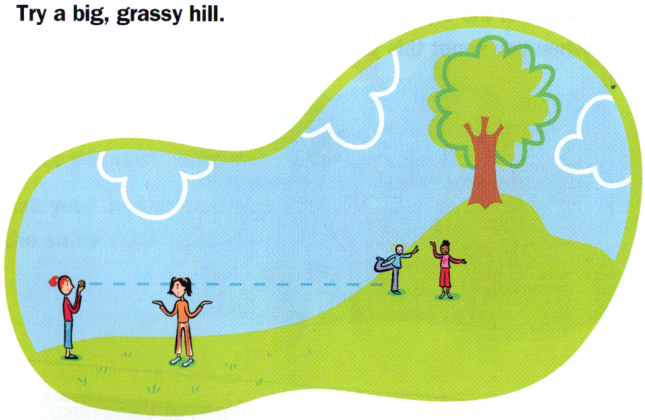
Photos: Alain Redder Illustrations: Tracey Wood Styling: Jamie Hanson, Judy Keith Additional credits on page 2.

These tricky pix will be a GIANT hit with your friends!



Honey, I Shrunk My Friends!

- To create this illusion, have your "giant" stand close to you and your "tiny people" stand *far* away, behind the "giant."
- This trick works best with a very simple background. Try a big, grassy hill.
- Move yourself and the people in the photo until the shot looks just right in your camera's viewfinder. Try using hand signals to tell your models where to move.



Hand-y Tips for Success!

Make sure your "giant" holds her hand as flat as possible so that it looks like your "tiny person" is standing *on* her palm, not in it or above it.

Wrong: Palm is visible.

Wrong: Hand and feet don't touch.

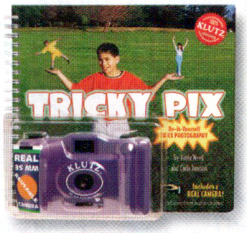
Right: Hand is flat.

Shoe-In

- You'll need a shoe to create this illusion. A high-top sneaker or boot works best.
- Position your "tiny person" far behind the shoe so that when you look through your camera's viewfinder, it looks like she's standing in the shoe.
- This trick works only if you can't see into the shoe, so lie on the ground and shoot from ankle height.

Bucket Buddy

- You'll need a bucket or basket for this trick.
- Position your "tiny person" far behind your "giant" so that the shot looks right through your camera's viewfinder.
- When you shoot this photo, position your camera below the height of the bucket so that the inside of the bucket doesn't show.



These fun-tastic photo tricks and ideas are adapted from the book *Tricky Pix* by Paula Weed and Carla Jimison, published by Klutz.

Just try to fool us!

Send your best tricky pix to the address on page 2. We'll print our favorites in an upcoming issue. ★

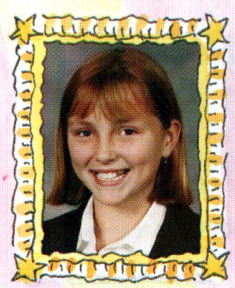
Go to americangirl.com to see what happened when girl testers tried out these tricky pix!

About 1 million kids in the U.S. are vegetarians.

What's on Your Plate?

Black-bean burgers, veggie stir-fry, tofu "turkey"—more and more schools and restaurants are serving up meatless dishes. We asked girls who tried going "veggie" to share their stories.

Too Much at Steak



Sarah B.
Age 12,
South Carolina

"One summer I went to camp, and a lot of the friends I made were vegetarian. I decided to try it, too.

"When I told my mom, she was worried about the amount of protein I'd be getting, but she said I could try it if I wanted to. At first, I went without red meat, and then I cut out fish and poultry. It was hard! I really missed steak and hamburgers.

"After about two months, I went back to eating meat. Part of me would still like to be a vegetarian, but it's too hard. Some of my favorite foods are meat!"

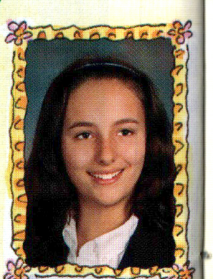
Take Your Order?

If you're thinking about going veggie, remember these things:

Talk to your parents first. Find out how they feel about vegetarianism, and work out meal arrangements together.

Eat right. You need plenty of protein and calcium to stay healthy and strong. Talk to a doctor or a dietician to make sure you get what you need.

Now-and-Then



Courtney P.
Age 11,
Maryland

Hold the Meat!

Celeste B.
Age 13, Ohio

"I became a vegetarian about six years ago. It isn't too hard for me. My mom doesn't eat much meat, so she and I fix veggies or tofu, and my dad and brother cook their own meat. If I'm going to someone's house, I tell them ahead of time that I don't eat meat so it won't be awkward. At restaurants, I can usually order a veggie plate.

"A few of my friends think it's strange that I'm a vegetarian, but most of them are supportive. I really don't remember how most meat tastes, except for seafood—I'm still looking for a good substitute for that! I'm happy with my choice, though, and I don't think I'll ever go back to eating meat."

Great Shake

Whether or not you eat meat, you'll love this chocolatey treat. It's made with soy milk—and it packs as much protein as a hot dog!

You will need:

An adult to help you

- A blender
- 2 peeled frozen bananas, cut into chunks (peel and cut the bananas before freezing)
- ½ cup chocolate soy milk
- 2 tablespoons chocolate syrup
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter

Ask an adult to blend ingredients until smooth.

Enjoy your soy!

Illustrations: Norm Bendell

Vegetarian

"My family is vegetarian, but I like to eat meat. When my mom started talking about not eating meat, I got angry—I really like fried chicken and hamburgers! To compromise, my mom serves chicken or fish once a week. I'm satisfied with this arrangement, but I miss having hamburgers and steak at home.

"If we go to a restaurant, I'll order shrimp or a hamburger. At school I eat meat, but I also bring tofu dishes from home. I like being a partial vegetarian. Someday I may go 'all veggie'—when I have to pay for my own groceries!"

Daily Specials

We asked girls to try some of the imitation soy meats. Our reviewers weren't the least bit chicken! Here's what they recommend:

Best Burger

Boca All American Classic Burger

"It tastes like the hamburger my dad makes." Ty T.

"I thought it was real meat." Elizabeth C.

"Tastes like McDonald's!" Kelsey L.

Top Dog

Morningstar Farms Veggie Dog

"I had trouble biting through the skin. It tastes real, though." Lindsey D.

"Tastes like a real hot dog." Kelsey M.

Nummy Nuggets

Boca Chik'n Nuggets

"Yum! It tastes real!" Julia S.

"These are very, very good!" Rachael S.

Go to americangirl.com for more on this meaty topic!

Product photos courtesy of Boca

Joy Ride

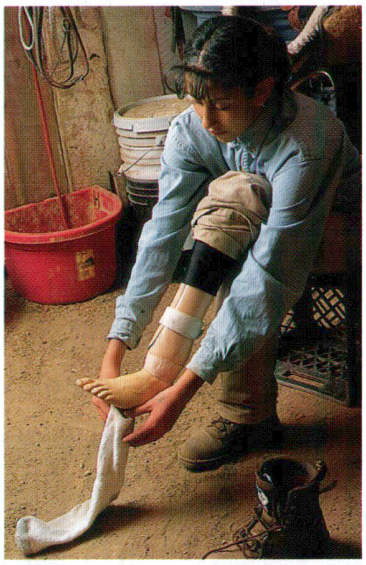
Anna never thought she'd be able to live out her dream and become a rodeo rider. Then horses taught Anna to believe in herself.

Photos: Gene Peach

Anna G. had always dreamed of riding horses in rodeos. But just three years ago, living out that dream seemed impossible. At the time, Anna was headed for trouble. Her grades were mostly D's and F's. She bullied other kids. The 11-year-old even got caught shoplifting. Then Anna was given a chance to change her life. She joined Ride to Pride, a program that pairs troubled kids with horses to help the kids work through their problems.

Facing Fears

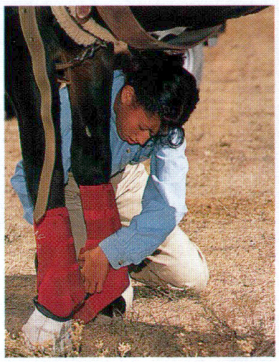
Before Anna started Ride to Pride, she didn't feel very good about herself. Anna was hit by a car when she was young. One of her feet was badly injured, and doctors had to amputate it. Growing up, Anna felt different from other kids because of her artificial foot. She thought it kept her from doing things she wanted to do—like wearing shorts and being an athlete. The New Mexico girl even thought people didn't like her because of her foot. "I felt like I was alone and I didn't have anyone to talk to," Anna explains. In spite of her worries, Anna longed to become a rodeo rider. But she thought she couldn't because of her foot.



Getting ready to ride, Anna pulls her sock onto her artificial foot.

Anna was a bit scared of horses when she first came to Ride to Pride. "I was afraid they were going to step on me or buck me off," she says. Then she met a tall, muscular, reddish-brown horse

Anna saddles Dixie before heading out for a ride.



Dixie wears boots to protect her legs during races.

Anna gives Dixie a drink after a tough ride.

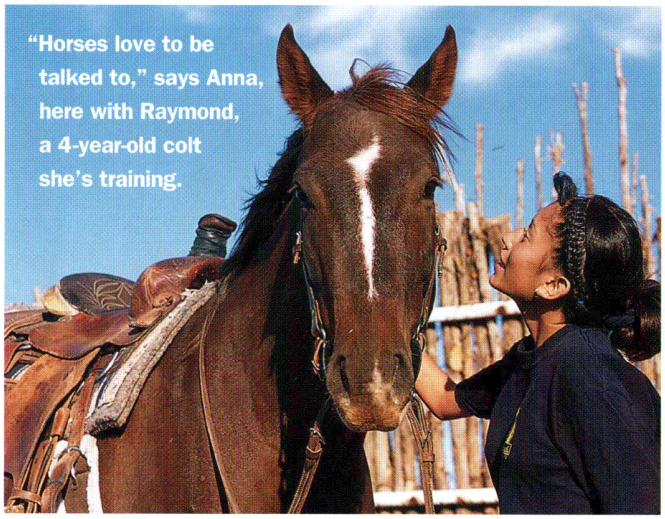
named Sequoia. Seeing such a big horse didn't ease Anna's fears. "But I told myself, 'It's your chance to be what you've always wanted to be: a barrel racer,'" recalls Anna, "and I went along with the program." After a few basic lessons in riding and horse care, Anna got up in the saddle, and she grew more secure. "On horseback, I felt kind of big—and that felt cool."

Making a Connection

Soon Anna realized that working with horses wouldn't be easy—physically or emotionally. For one thing, Anna wasn't in shape to ride. The first time she rode Sequoia at a trot, Anna says, "It was really bouncy. I had no strength in my legs at that time." Since then, Anna has built up her strength by riding nearly every day after school. "Now I have a lot of muscle in my legs, and I can do about anything," the 14-year-old explains.

Anna's riding instructors taught her to treat a horse the same way she should treat a human: with respect and care. The lesson made Anna think about how she *really* treated other people. She knew she wasn't always as nice as she could be. "Before, if something bad happened to someone, I didn't care," Anna recalls. "But now I do."

Anna needed to make friends with the horses to get them to do what she wanted. "It's a relationship like any other—it takes time to develop," explains Lynn M., a counselor at Ride to Pride and Anna's friend. Anna was always willing to put in that time. What's more, Anna learned to believe that horses would be kind to her if she was kind to them. "I trust all the horses I ride," Anna says. "That's how to get a relationship with horses—trust them."



"Horses love to be talked to," says Anna, here with Raymond, a 4-year-old colt she's training.

> "I told myself, 'It's your chance to be what you've always wanted to be: a barrel racer.'"

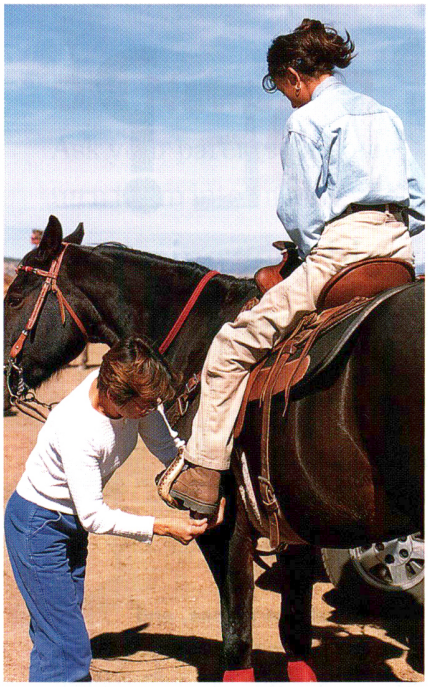
Anna had discovered something she was truly good at. Everyone at Ride to Pride noticed how well horses responded to her soft voice and gentle touch. Anna began to feel like a success, not just with horses, but in all parts of her life. Her grades improved—now she earns A's and B's—and she started to make new friends, too.

Anna and her friend Lynn wait for Anna's turn in the rodeo ring.

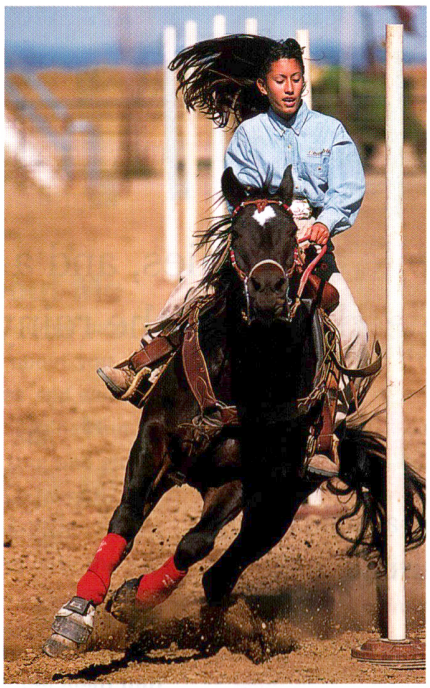
A Dream Comes True

Training Dixie, the spirited bay horse Anna rides in rodeos, has been one of Anna's biggest challenges. Like Anna, Dixie was in trouble before she came to Ride to Pride. Dixie lived with an owner who didn't take care of her—the owner even hit her. Naturally, Dixie was afraid of people. The horse needed a trainer with lots of patience. "So I rode her, and I paid attention to her," says Anna. "I brushed her, and I spent time with her."

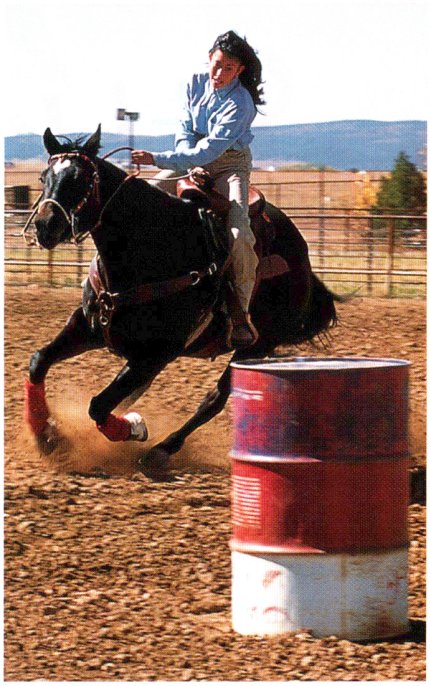
After working with Dixie for a while, Anna realized that she and the horse have a lot in



Anna can't feel her foot, and sometimes it slips out of the stirrup. Here a friend secures Anna's foot with a rubber band.



According to Anna, Dixie learned pole bending "faster than a speeding bullet." The pair won this race!



"If I'm barrel racing, I have to move with the horse," says Anna. "It takes teamwork to get around that barrel faster."

common. "Dixie acts like me sometimes," Anna says. "Sometimes I'm a brat, and Dixie acts the same. Then sometimes I'm nice and she's nice. It's like she's copying me." Dixie helped Anna understand how others saw her.

Before Dixie came to Ride to Pride, she had never run in rodeos, so Anna trained her for barrel racing and other events. "I had to teach her everything!" says Anna. To succeed at barrel racing, a rider and her horse need to know exactly how and when the other will move—and that takes a lot of practice. Riders also need strong muscles to keep their balance. Through barrel racing, Anna explains, "I've learned that I'm very athletic and that I can do more with my leg than I was doing before."

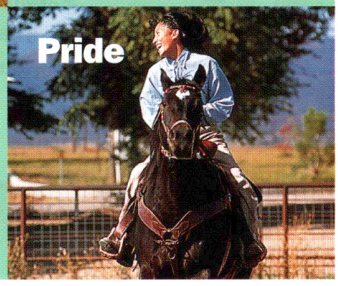
Today Anna is confident she can succeed, no matter what challenges she faces. "Horses have taught me to believe in myself," she explains. "Now I have a purpose in this world!" ★

What I've Learned from Horses

"When horses want to run, it takes patience to calm them down and not get mad. I've learned that you have to take it easy."

"Before I came to Ride to Pride, I didn't really have respect for anybody. But horses taught me that if you don't give respect, you won't get it back."

"Working with horses makes me feel very proud. I know I can control the horses, and they listen to me. That really makes me feel good!"



Stuck Inside?

A deck of cards, a pile of pennies, and a few old magazines are all you need to cure the rainy day blues!

Kooky Cards

Do you have a deck of cards lying around that you can't use because it's missing one card? Don't throw it away—use it!

Puzzled

Cut up a few cards and turn them into a tricky jigsaw puzzle. Mix up all the pieces, and challenge your siblings to see who can put together one card the quickest!

Pure Magic!

Staple cards together, alternating sides on which you staple. Trick your friends by holding each end of the deck in your hands and creating a rainbow shape. They'll wonder when you turned into a magician!

Hangin' Out

Make card garlands for deck-oration. Punch holes in both ends of each card. Use colorful yarn to tie the cards together. Hang in your doorway for a wild welcome.

Queen of the Castle

Build a card castle, only this time tape it together. Your family will be amazed at your building skills!

Suit Yourself

Have a card scavenger hunt. Hide cards all over the house. (Use index cards to replace missing cards.) Each player picks a suit and tries to find her cards—in order! If she finds one she doesn't need yet, she must put it back and try to remember where it is. First one to find all her cards wins!

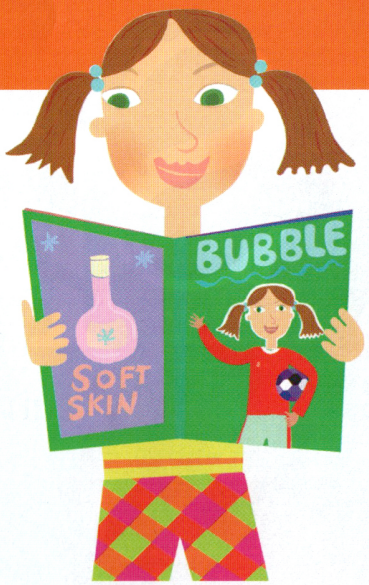
Illustrations: Tracy McGuinness

Old News

Ask your parents for some old magazines and turn them into an afternoon full of fun!

All About Me

Create a journal page that's all about you. Cut out images and words from a magazine that describe you, and glue them into a journal. Include a recent photo of you, and date the page so that you can see how your interests change!



Friendly Faces

Cut up photos (that you don't want) of your friends' and family members' faces. Glue the heads on bodies in a magazine. Have a friend or relative look through the magazine to see if she can find all the familiar faces!

Story Time

Randomly find three photos of people in a magazine. Rip out the photos, name the three people, and create a story about them.

Hang In There Make a paper chain from magazine ads. Cut pages into short strips. Loop strips into circles and tape.

Penny-wise

Raid the penny jar in your house and have some fun!

Old Money

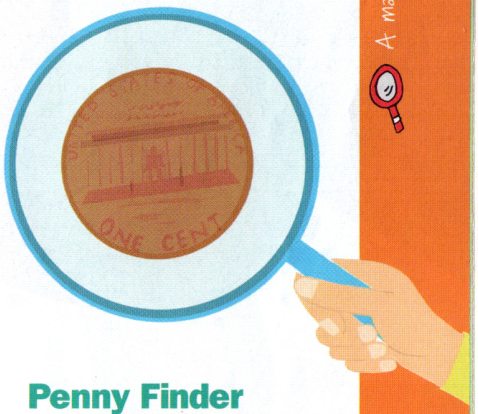
Tarnish your penny. Fold a piece of paper towel twice into a square. Put the penny in the middle of the towel. Place it into a small bowl with 3 tablespoons of vinegar. In a few hours, your penny will look old!

Lucky Penny

Find a penny with your birth year. Use an eraser to clean the dirt away. See if your shiny new penny will bring you luck!

Where's Abe?

Bet your friends that Abe Lincoln is on both sides of a penny. When they say "No way!" look closely between the pillars inside the monument on the back of a penny. It's a baby Abe!



Penny Finder

Dump a bunch of pennies in the middle of a table. Have a contest with your siblings or friends to see who can find the oldest, newest, shiniest, and dirtiest penny. Also look for Canadian pennies, wheat pennies, and pennies that were made the year you were born.

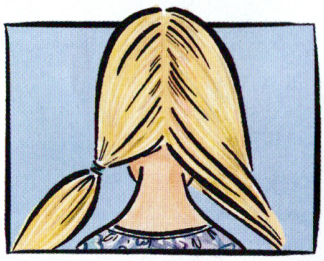
A man in Washington state collected more than 1 million pennies in his basement. That's $10,000!

Spring

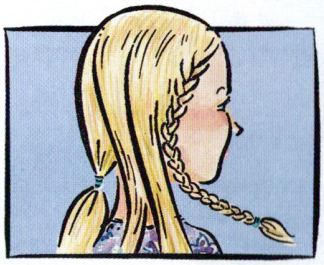
Styles

Long, short, curly, straight—these tips will make your hair look great!

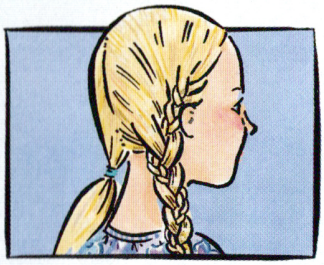
Braidy Bunch Works best with very long hair.



1 Make a part down the back of your scalp for pigtails. Tie off one side with an elastic.

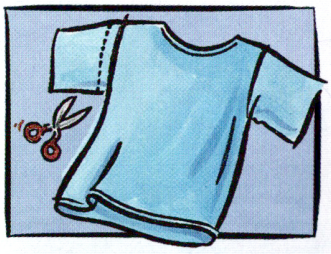


2 Separate loose hair into 3 sections. Make a small braid with the section in front. Secure with an elastic.



3 Using the small braid and the other two sections, make a braid. Secure with an elastic. Repeat on the other side.

Q-T Pie Try this fun way to recycle an old T-shirt.



1 Ask Mom or Dad to help you find an adult-sized, short-sleeved T-shirt. Make sure the sleeve stretches enough to fit snugly around your head. Use scissors to cut off one sleeve.

2 Pull the sleeve over your head and down around your neck. Slide the sleeve up so it's just past your hairline. Leave bangs in or out.

3 Finish with sparkly hair clips or bobby pins.

'Do-Dads

We asked girls to see if the latest hair gadgets really work.

Quick Braid

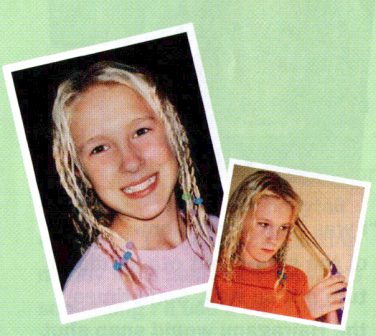
By Conair

Use the battery-powered wand to twist strands of hair, then slide the beads onto the ends. Available at discount stores, $25

"The Quick Braid doesn't really braid your hair—it twists it. The directions were pretty easy to follow, but sometimes it twists hard and hurts, and it tangled my hair. I wouldn't buy it."

★★☆☆☆

Sophie S.
Age 12, Florida



"It took me 20 minutes to do eight braids, and I needed my mom to do the back. I'd still buy one—I love doing new things with my hair!"

★★★★★

Britny G.
Age 13, West Virginia

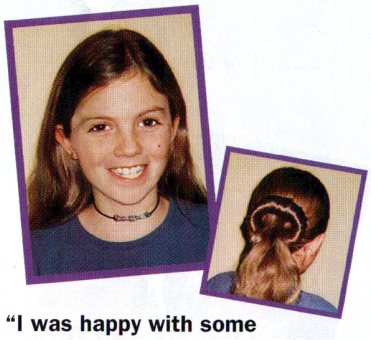
Hairagami

It bends, it snaps, it's a wrap! This accessory lets you put your hair up in fancy styles. The Hairagami comes with an instruction booklet. Available at discount stores, $9

"The Hairagami was hard to use at first, but it got easier. It took me a couple tries to get it right. My favorite style was the Serpentine. I think buying one is money well spent!"

★★★★★

Jessica T.
Age 12, Georgia

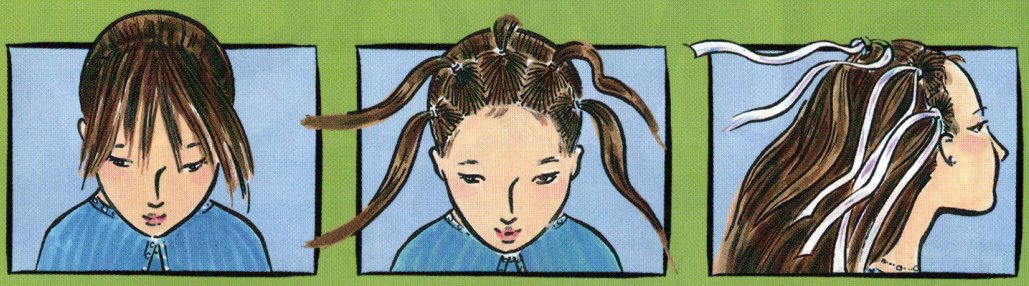


"I was happy with some of the styles, but others didn't turn out so well. Sometimes the Hairagami would snap shut when I wasn't ready, and I'd have to start over."

★★★★☆

Anna H.
Age 10, Maine

All Tied Up Ask a friend to help do this 'do.

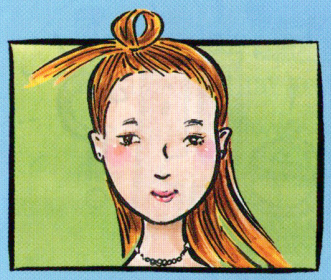


1 Make a horizontal part across the top of your head from ear to ear. Tie off hair in back with an elastic.

2 Divide the hair in front into 5 equal sections. Starting in the center, secure each section with an elastic.

3 Undo the hair in back. Tie a narrow ribbon around each elastic. Let the ribbons hang down the length of your hair.

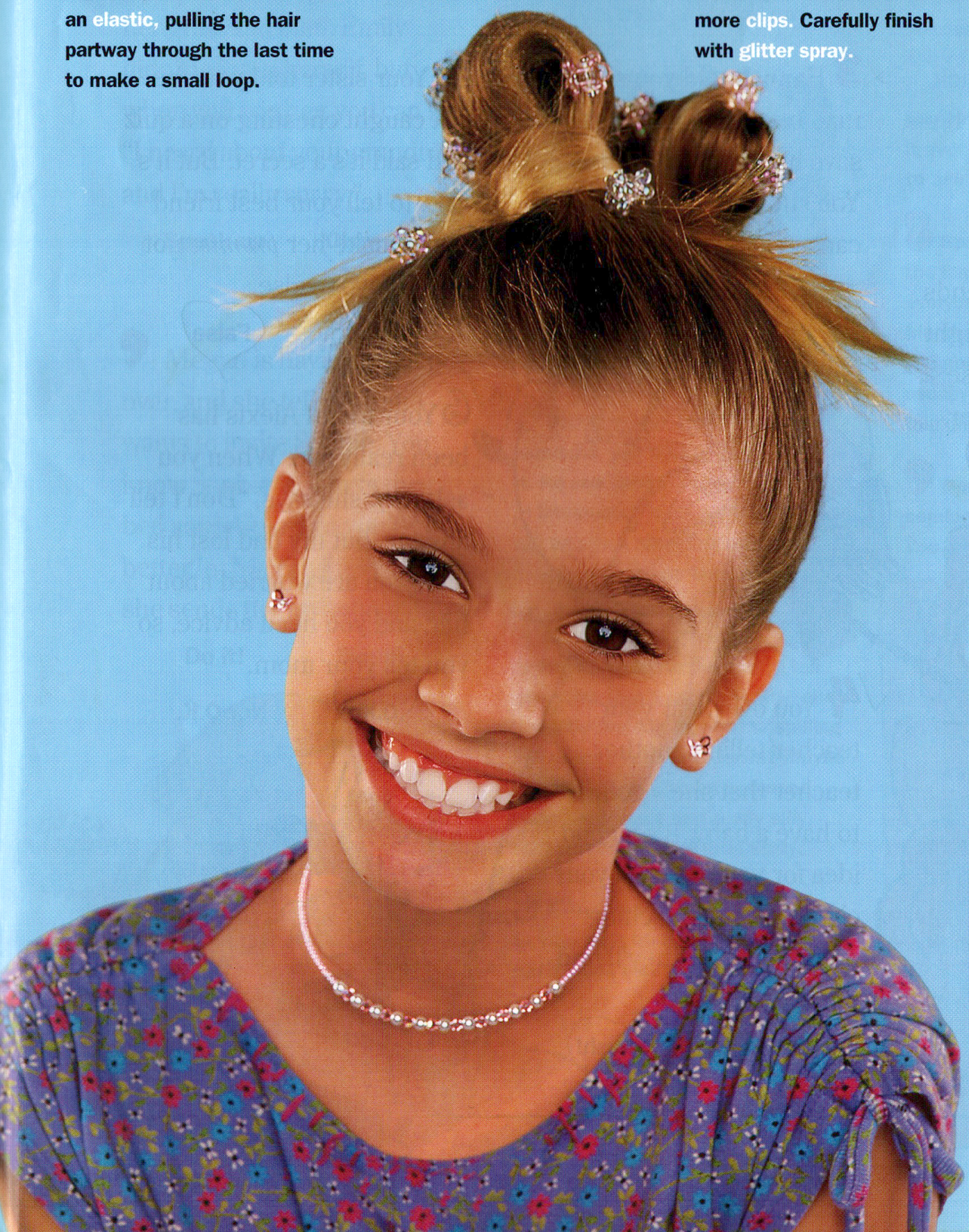
Bright Butterfly Go glam with glitter!



1 Starting behind one ear, make a horizontal part across the top of your head. Using the front section, make a high ponytail and secure with an elastic, pulling the hair partway through the last time to make a small loop.

2 Use the back hair to make another ponytail slightly to the side of the first one. Secure with an elastic. Adjust loops as desired.

3 Wrap a few strands of hair around the loops to cover the elastics, and secure with a few butterfly clips. Decorate and secure some ends with more clips. Carefully finish with glitter spray.



Photos: Chris Hynes/Hot Shots Monica Skeisvoll Illustrations: Shawn Banner Styling: Jamie Hanson, Judy Keith Quick Braid photo courtesy of Conair

Whirly-Wigs

Fake hair you can wear! Available at stores like Claire's and Wal-Mart, and at mall carts. Styles and prices vary.

"It takes me only a few minutes to style my scrunchie. It cost me $3, but I think it's worth more. I wear it about four times a week. In fact, I'm wearing it now!"

★★★★½

Katherine N.
Age 10, Wisconsin

"I wore my ponytail clip for school pictures, and no one ever knew it was a fake. It's the exact color of my natural hair. My ponytail cost $45. I used my babysitting money for it because I know it's something I'll use a lot. Then I get to be known as the girl with the great hair!"

★★★★★

Britta D.
Age 11, Wisconsin

Mail photos of your spring styles to the address on page 2! ★

Quiz

Is It O.K. to Tell?

You just heard some big news! Should you pass it along or keep it to yourself? Take this quiz and find out.

1 Henry told you that Jack likes your friend Grace. It's fine to tell Grace.

Sure **Nope**

2 You can tell your friends that your cousin Lisa might flunk fifth grade, because they don't even know her.

Yes **No**

3 Hannah told you she's mad because Kim didn't save her a seat at lunch. You should tell Kim so she can apologize.

Tell! **Don't!**

4 You overhear your teacher telling another teacher that she's going to have a baby. It's a good idea for you to tell all your classmates the exciting news. After all, they'll find out soon anyway.

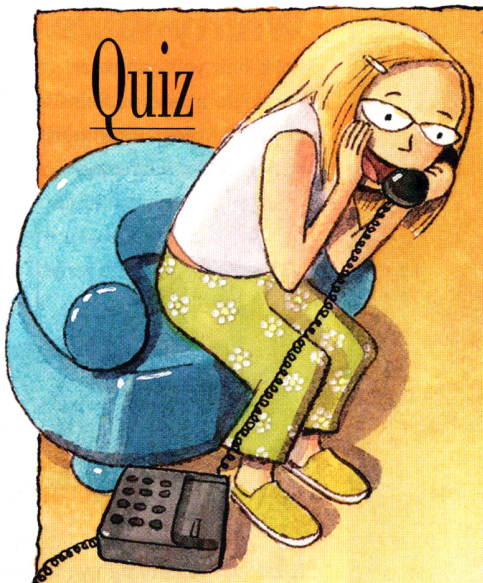
Spread it! **Shush!**

5 Your sister told you she got caught cheating on a quiz and said it's a secret. But it's O.K. to tell your best friend if you make her *promise* not to tell anyone else.

True **False**

6 Your friend Alexis has been really sad. When you ask why, she says, "Don't tell anyone, but my dad lost his job." You are worried about her, and you need advice, so you tell your mom.

O.K. **Not O.K.**



Illustrations: Scott Nash

7 Carly didn't tell you *not* to tell anyone that her parents are getting divorced, so it's fine for you to tell people.

Definitely **No way**

8 Emily's been gone from school for a few days. Your mom told you that it's because her grandma died. Emily didn't tell you herself, but when you see her, you can say, "I heard about your grandma, and I'm really sorry."

Speak up **Clam up**

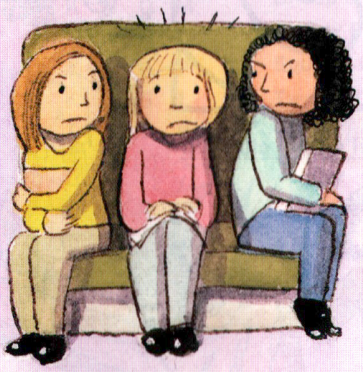
9 Megan is having a sleepover, and she tells you she wants to invite Sophie. You know Sophie still wets the bed sometimes, so you'd better let Megan know before she sends the invitations.

Do it! **Don't!**

Answers

1 Nope. Are you *sure* Jack wants Grace to know? Maybe Jack wants it to be a secret, but Henry blabbed. Unless *Jack* asks you to tell Grace, don't tell her.

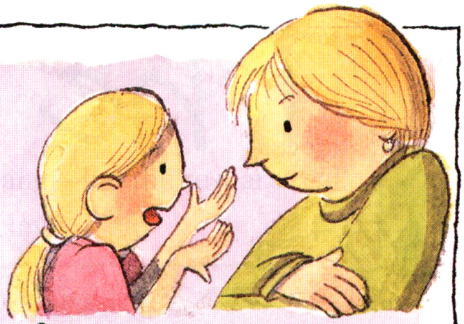
2 No. Even though your friends don't know your cousin, it would really hurt her feelings if it got back to her that you told. It's better to be safe and keep this info to yourself, even if you *think* your cousin would never know.



3 Don't! If your friend is mad at someone, you should stay out of it. No one likes hearing this kind of information from someone who's not involved. Chances are, both friends will end up mad—at you!

4 Shush! Even if it's true, your teacher should be the one to tell everyone. Don't spoil her fun—she's probably looking forward to spilling the beans. And who knows? Maybe she was talking about someone else. Then you'd feel really silly for spreading that wrong story.

5 False. You can tell *your* secrets to your best friend, but don't tell her anyone else's secrets.



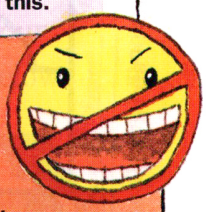
6 O.K. Telling something because you need help is totally different from just telling it to get attention. If you do tell, make sure the person can *really* help you—like Mom.

7 No way. When someone tells you something very personal, you should just assume it's a secret. Carly may want you to let people know so she doesn't have to tell it over and over, but wait for her to *ask* you to do so.

8 Speak up. When someone dies, the family is usually too busy to let everyone know, so they may ask friends to help. Even if they don't tell you about it themselves, people are usually glad to know you've been thinking of them when someone dies.

9 Don't! If Sophie doesn't feel comfortable sleeping over, she won't. You should keep quiet about this.

Blabbermouth Busters

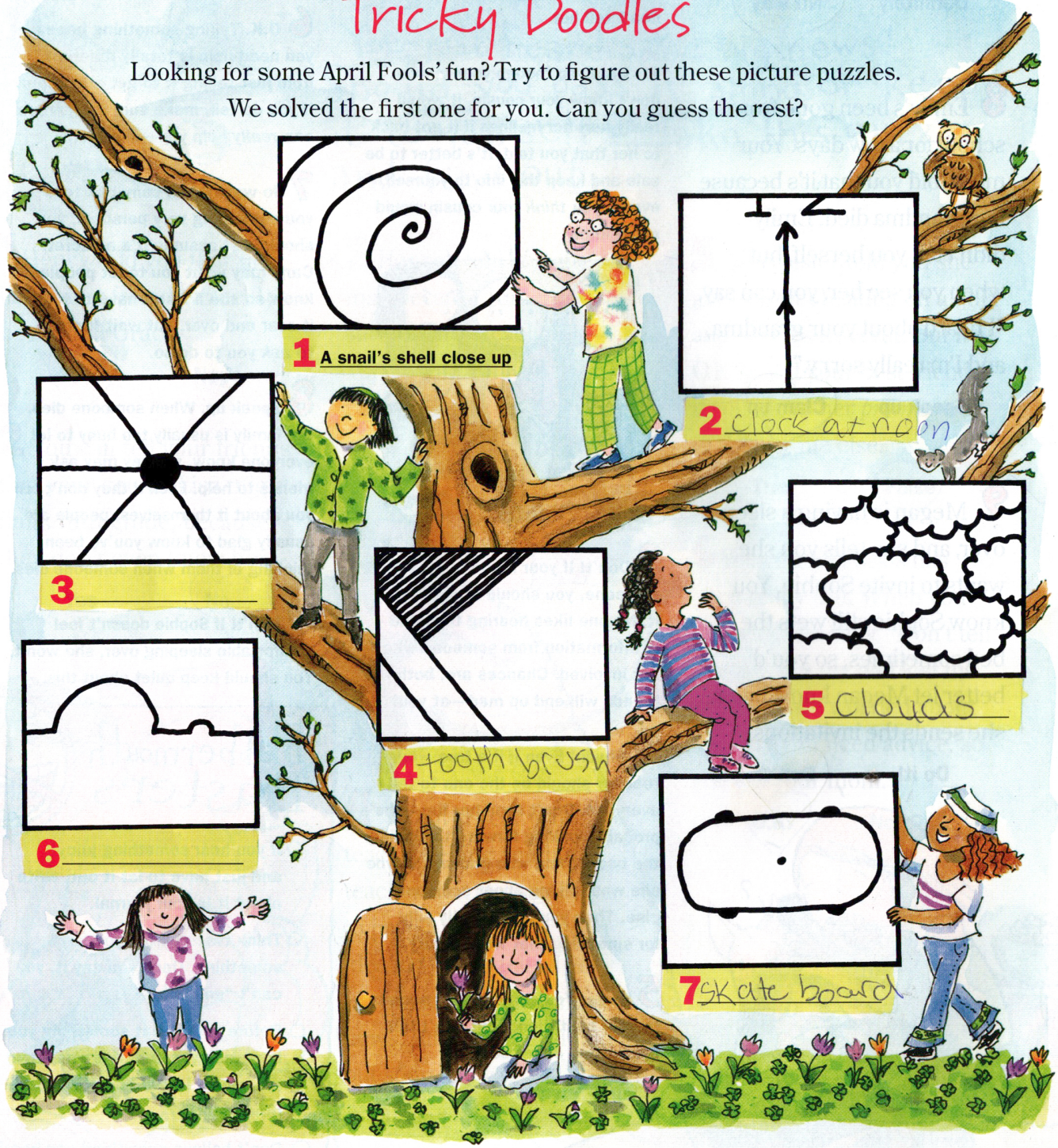


- If you hear something juicy and just have to let it out, write about it in your journal.
- Think twice before you say something. Once you say it, you can't "un-say" it.
- Before you repeat something you hear, ask yourself: if it was about me, would I want someone to tell other people?
- Don't believe everything you hear!

The Giggle Gang

Tricky Doodles

Looking for some April Fools' fun? Try to figure out these picture puzzles. We solved the first one for you. Can you guess the rest?



When is an Irish potato not an Irish potato? When it's a French fry!

Why do people wear shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day? Because regular rocks are too heavy.

How did the leprechaun get to the moon? He rode in a shamrocket!

Why did St. Patrick drive the snakes out of Ireland?

All answers on page 44.

Silly City, U.S.A.

Three of these crazy town names are made up by the Giggle Gang—but the rest are real! Find the nine real names in the puzzle below.

A	D	R	G	W	E	S	T	T	H	U	M	B	H
G	W	P	S	G	Y	E	G	P	P	N	E	A	L
L	L	I	H	L	E	R	R	I	U	Q	S	O	N
H	B	P	Q	W	Y	O	B	U	P	L	U	A	T
P	H	A	U	N	P	R	W	L	H	D	A	S	G
E	R	N	L	U	E	P	E	T	M	O	L	B	M
H	S	T	P	D	E	W	H	D	R	R	C	E	S
D	T	H	E	D	L	W	L	E	K	T	A	Q	Y
S	B	E	A	S	S	A	S	D	R	A	T	N	R
W	O	R	B	E	Y	E	S	Y	E	K	N	O	M
R	N	B	L	U	H	A	P	P	Y	L	A	N	D
Y	D	U	A	E	O	R	E	N	U	A	S	G	P
R	A	R	K	S	T	N	A	K	E	K	L	S	L
H	B	N	E	K	L	I	M	R	E	T	T	U	B

Buttermilk, Kansas
Cheesemill, Wisconsin
Happyland, Oklahoma
Kitten's Paw, South Carolina
Monkey's Eyebrow, Kentucky
Panther Burn, Mississippi
Santa Claus, Indiana
Sheep's Wool, Idaho
Sleepy Eye, Minnesota
Squirrel Hill, Pennsylvania
Two Egg, Florida
West Thumb, Wyoming

A Mind for Money

Spend some brainpower on these money mysteries.

1 What's the most money you can have in coins and still not be able to make change for a dollar?

2 If you write five thousand, five hundred five dollars as $5,505, how should you write twelve thousand, twelve hundred twelve dollars?

Spring Secret

There's a message in these squiggly lines! To read it, hold the magazine flat about four or five inches in front of your face, just below eye level. What does it say?

"Knock, knock." "Who's there?" "Irish." "Irish who?" "Irish you a happy St. Patrick's Day!"

What baseball position do leprechauns usually play? Shortstop!

Because he couldn't afford to pay for plane fare.

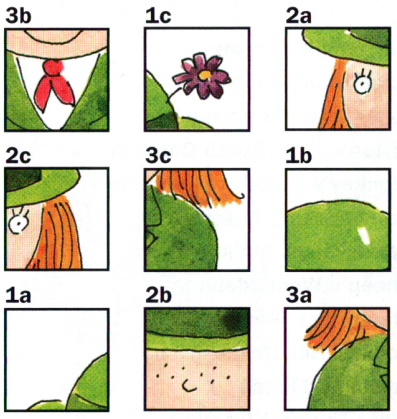
Where would you find a leprechaun baseball team? In little league!

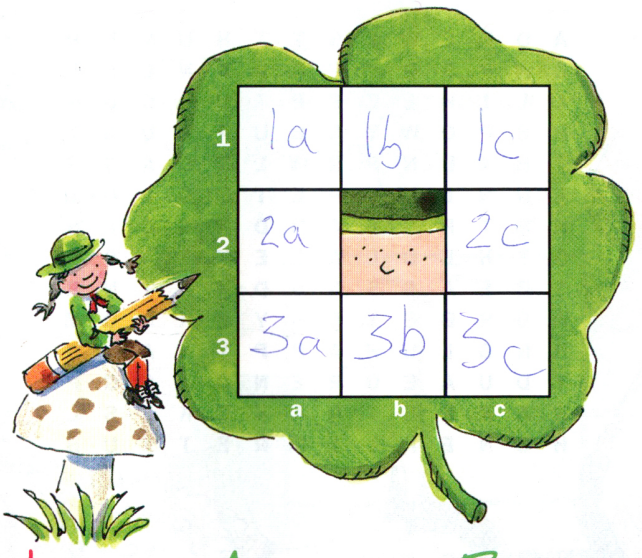
Illustrations: Paul Meisel

The Giggle Gang

Quick Draw

Copy the drawing from each box on the left into the matching place in the grid on the right. We've started you out by filling in the center box.





Flower Arrangements

olgaldai

Unscramble the mixed-up letters to spell the names of flowers. Then unscramble the letters that appear in flower drawings to answer this riddle:

What kind of flower is always happy?

1. foldfadi — d a f f o d i l
2. rangeium — g e r a n i u m
3. tunapie — p e t u n i a
4. vetilo — v i o l e t
5. siday — d a i s y
6. cinnarato — c a r n a t i o n

Riddle answer: o l g a l d a i

Answer Box

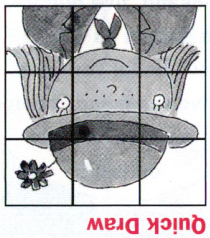
Tricky Doodles: 1. a snail's shell close up, 2. a clock at noon, 3. the top of a base-ball cap, 4. a close-up of a toothbrush, 5. a flock of sheep, 6. a cat chasing a mouse under a rug, 7. a bug on a skateboard

Silly City, U.S.A.: Cheesemill, Kitten's Paw, and Sheep's Wool are made up.

A Mind for Money: 1. Three quarters, four dimes, and four pennies for a total of $1.19; 2. $13,212.

Spring Secret: Spring has sprung!

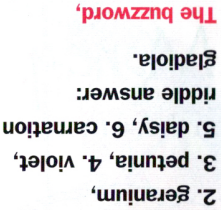
Quick Draw



Flower Arrangements: 1. daffodil, 2. Geranium, 3. petunia, 4. violet, 5. daisy, 6. carnation

riddle answer: gladiola.

The buzzword, interpid, is used on the back cover.



What kind of bow can't you tie? A rainbow! Diane W. Age 14, Pennsylvania

How do you catch a unique animal? Unique up on it. Sydney S. Age 10, Georgia

How do skunks communicate? On smellular phones. Erica M. Age 11, Connecticut

"Knock, knock." "Who's there?" "Sarah." "Sarah who?" "Sarah doctor in the house? I don't feel well." Sarah B. Age 12, Washington

What do you call a flying skunk? A smellicopter! Dasha R. Age 12, Illinois

Bored? Check out Mini Games in To Do Today at americangirl.com for a new game or puzzle every day!

Who's That Girl?

Here's an American girl of yesterday. Read the clues about her and guess who she is now.

Clue 1

At age four, I threw a temper tantrum at a California mall and made such a terrible scene that a talent scout stopped to watch. "You've got great spunk," she said as she handed my mom her business card.

Clue 2

Baseball, handball, kickball, soccer, volleyball—in grade school I tried (and loved) them all. When it came to sports, I wasn't the greatest player, but I sure had fun trying!

Clue 3

I loved helping my mom bake tarts and cinnamon cookies. My job was measuring ingredients and mixing the dough. But the dough was so yummy that I often ate as much as I was kneading!

Clue 4

Being a cheerleader put real pep in my step. But so did my trampoline, and I loved doing flips and tricks—the perfect passion for a high flyer like me.

Here I am at age 10.

Clue 5

A bike fell on my leg while I was acting in my first commercial. I screamed when I saw the cut, but I didn't cry until after we were done filming. Even then, I knew what all actors know: the show must go on!

Take a guess!

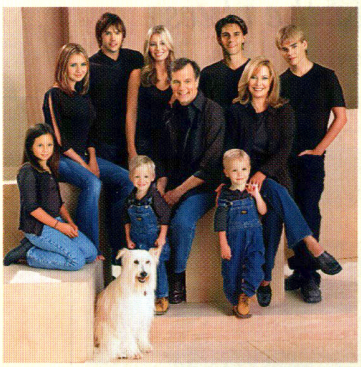
When this American girl grew up, she became:

- ☐ an Olympic gymnast
- ☑ an actress
- ☐ a sports broadcaster
- ☐ a famous chef

Turn the page and find out if you're right!

Illustrations: Laurie Caple

She's Beverley Mitchell



The cast of "7th Heaven"

Spunky Beverley Mitchell is still making scenes—not by fussing at the mall, but on TV. "As soon as I knew what the word 'act' meant, I knew that's what I wanted to do. I started acting when I was very young, and my passion for it just gets stronger," she says about living out her dream.

If it sounds like Beverley's in heaven, she is—"7th Heaven." As Lucy, one of seven children in the Camden clan, Beverley plays a levelheaded, caring teen—a big sister with normal flaws that make her character seem real.

"Lucy's sweet, but she's not perfect," admits Beverley, now in her sixth season on the hit family drama. "Sometimes Lucy says dumb things, but she's just trying to do what she thinks is right."

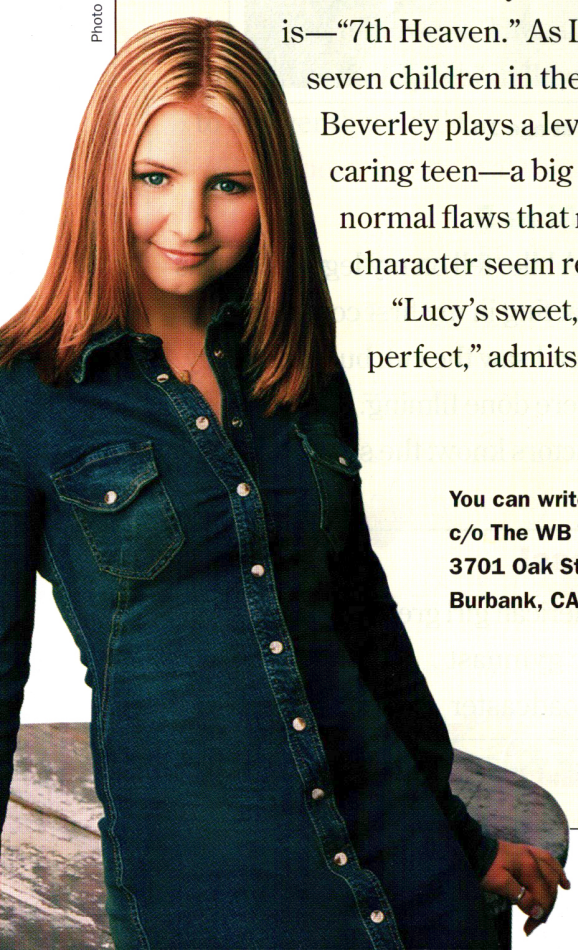
Having a large TV family is a special gift, explains Beverley, a real-life only child. "We felt like a family after the first episode. The puzzle pieces just fit!"

As a girl, Beverley learned about motivation and leadership by being a cheerleader. She hopes to be a leader *behind* the camera as a director or producer one day. Today, she studies film and production in college in addition to the long hours she puts in on the set of "7th Heaven."

Beverley acts out a scene with her TV brothers, Barry Watson and David Gallagher.

"I adore my job. I love entertaining people and making them smile," she says. "I think it's the greatest job in the world!" ★

Photo credits on page 2.



You can write to Beverley c/o The WB TV Network 3701 Oak Street Burbank, CA 91505

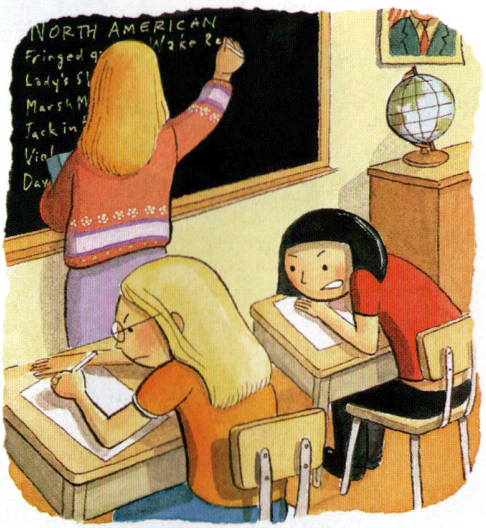
Beverley's advice to American girls:

"Don't ever be afraid to say, 'This is what I think.' Use your inner strength! If you don't gain courage as a girl, you won't have it when you get older."

Beverley Mitchell

In real life, Beverley is actually one year older than Jessica Biel, who plays her TV older sister, Mary.

HELP!



Dear *American Girl*,

The girl who sits next to me in class always cheats off my paper! Our teacher told her to stop, but the girl said she doesn't cheat. I can't move, so what can I do?

Not fair

Talk to your teacher again. This time, ask if you can use a blank cover sheet. As you take the test, slide the cover sheet over your answers so no one can see them. If your teacher won't let you do that, try writing smaller and folding the top part of your paper over as you work. With a little luck, your neighbor will find it easier to do her own work than to copy yours.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I worry a lot. In fact, I worry that I worry too much. How can I stop worrying?

Worrywart

Let your feelings out. Write down a few problems that worry you the most, and try to think of solutions. Also, talk to parents or friends about what's bothering you. Even if they don't have any solutions, getting your worries off your chest will be a big relief. When you start to worry about something, keep busy with a fun project, listen to an upbeat CD, or play with a pet. If you *really* try to stop worrying, but can't, or your worrying is causing you to miss out on things, it's time to talk about it with your parents, and probably with your doctor, too.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I have always had a rocky relationship with my sister, but now that she is moving out, I am really going to miss her. What do I do?

troubled sibling

Write your sister a note telling her how you feel. Chances are, she feels the same way. Keep in touch with her through e-mail or phone calls. Sure, you'll miss your sis when she moves, but the good news is that you'll probably get along much better. You'll be able to forget about things like who's supposed to fold the laundry and just focus on being friends. When you do get together, you may have trouble believing there was ever a time that you didn't get along great.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

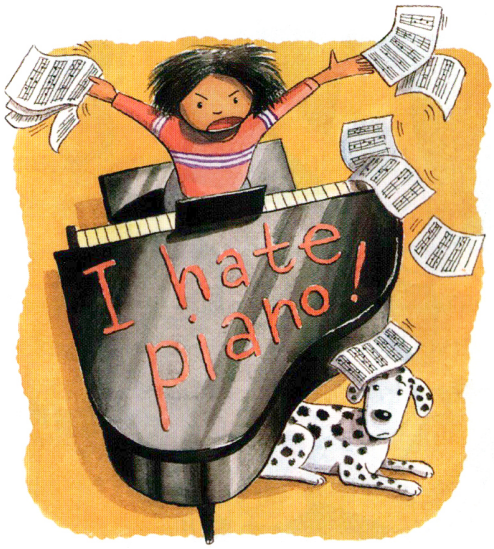
One of my best friends chews with her mouth open! I hate seeing her food all mashed up and hearing that disgusting chomping noise. How do I tell her that it drives me crazy without hurting her feelings?

Masticated in MI

Your best bet is to be polite and persistent. The next time it happens when it's just the two of you, say, "You probably don't know you're doing this, but you chew with your mouth open." If she's talking, say, "Go ahead and finish chewing. I'll wait for you." Repeat as often as necessary. Soon you'll be able to hang out without getting grossed out.

Illustrations: Scott Nash

MORE HELP!



Dear *American Girl*,

I hate piano! I've been playing it for about four years, and I don't like to practice. I'm getting to the hardest part in the piano books, and it makes me want to quit. I've told my parents I hate it, but they tell me to keep going.

Piano Hater

Try changing your routine. Ask your teacher if you can work from a new music book. If you love the songs you're learning, you might not even notice that they're harder to play. Start practice with a song you like, and give yourself a little reward for practicing. Try writing songs, too. If you still hate it after a few months, talk to your parents about doing something that you love instead.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I've had these two friends since preschool. One of them called me and said that she didn't like our other friend anymore. I cried because I love doing things together. What can I do?

So Sad

If this is just a squabble between your friends, it will probably sort itself out soon. But if your friend really wants to stop doing things as a trio, you can't change her mind. Whatever happens, try not to be the messenger between these girls, because you'll end up being the one they get mad at. For now, just stay friendly with both of them. It won't be the same as when you were a trio, but that doesn't mean you won't have fun.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I drink way too many sodas! I'm always drinking them at parties, restaurants, and with my meals at home. I think they're making me fat. I've tried to cut down, but I can't!

Cola Fanatic

You're right—too much soda can make you gain weight. It can also hurt your teeth and keep you from getting enough calcium for strong, healthy bones. To cut down, drink water when you're thirsty before you have soda. Order a small cola at a restaurant instead of a large. Drink milk or water with meals at home. See if your parents can help you drink less soda, too. Breaking a habit takes time and effort, so don't get discouraged. Good luck!

★

Advice from You

"Set a goal for yourself this year to do one good and helpful thing for the poor, your town, or the environment. Then get your friends to help, too. You'll have fun and be doing a great thing for the world!"

Callin R.
Age 12, Washington

Need advice? Got advice? Write:

Help!

AmericanGirl

8400 Fairway Place

Middleton, WI 53562

Shining Star

Katherine L., 13, loves to act and sing. She's a pro with a karaoke machine, too—but not in the way you might expect. Katherine uses her family's karaoke machine to record books for people who can't read because of poor eyesight or illness. "I was read to a lot as a little child," the Montana girl explains, "and I thought it must be terrible not to be able to read at all."

Katherine started her project last year. So far she and her family have recorded stories by Edgar Allan Poe and O. Henry, plus Aesop's Fables, Bible stories, and a few children's books. Katherine is also working on *Little House on the Prairie* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Creating all the voices for *Harry Potter* has been a challenge. "It's kind of hard, since I'm a girl, to make Hagrid sound gruff," Katherine explains, "but I'm working on it!"

Katherine knows that her hard work is appreciated. The hospitals, senior centers, and libraries that have received her tapes have asked for more! Katherine's books-on-tape project has taught her that even a small effort can make a real difference in people's lives. "A project doesn't have to be huge or flashy to be appreciated by those you are working to help," she says.

Do you have a friend who shines as a volunteer? Maybe you're a star volunteer yourself. Write to the address on page 2 to tell us all about the shining stars you know. Each girl we honor receives a certificate and a sparkly star pendant—and AG will donate $500 to her cause.

Slumber Party Spectacular

More clever ideas for late-night fun!

Dandy Doodles

The cutest little drawings you ever saw

Friends Forever Quiz

Find out if you know your best bud as well as she knows you!

For lots more fun, visit americangirl.com! Learn a new buzzword and find your daily fortune!

AmericanGirl®

Coming up in the May/June issue

Family Fights—Solved!

Advice on how to deal with your worst sibling struggles

Feeling Chicken?

Intrepid readers share their best tips on being brave.

Pretty Paint

Create a one-of-a-kind gift for Mom!

Amelia Lends a Hand

A sneak peek at her *new* book about sign language!

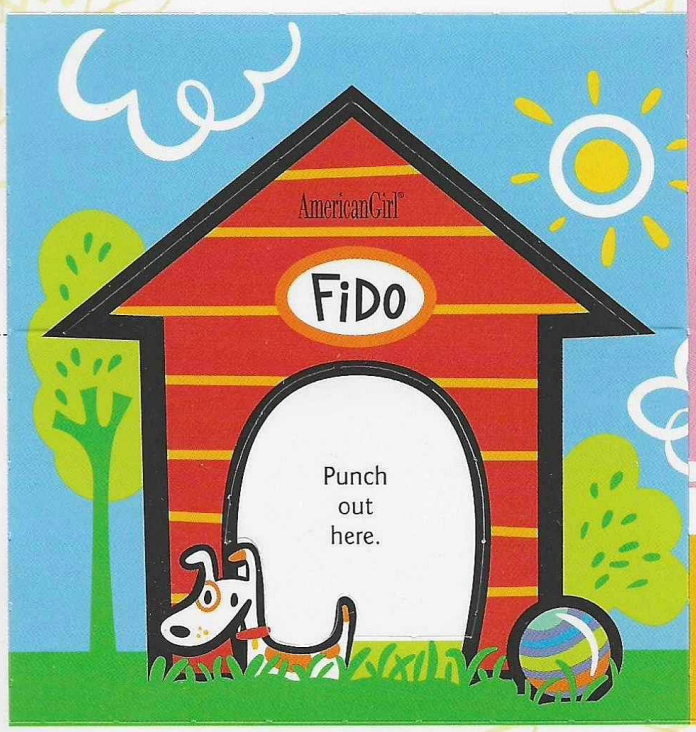
Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

Fold here.

AG's Photo Frames

Make any photo funny with these wacky frames! Just pop out a frame, tape a picture to the back, and fold down the sides so that the frame stands up. Or leave the frame flat, and tack it up on your bulletin board.

Ta-da! It's picture-perfect!



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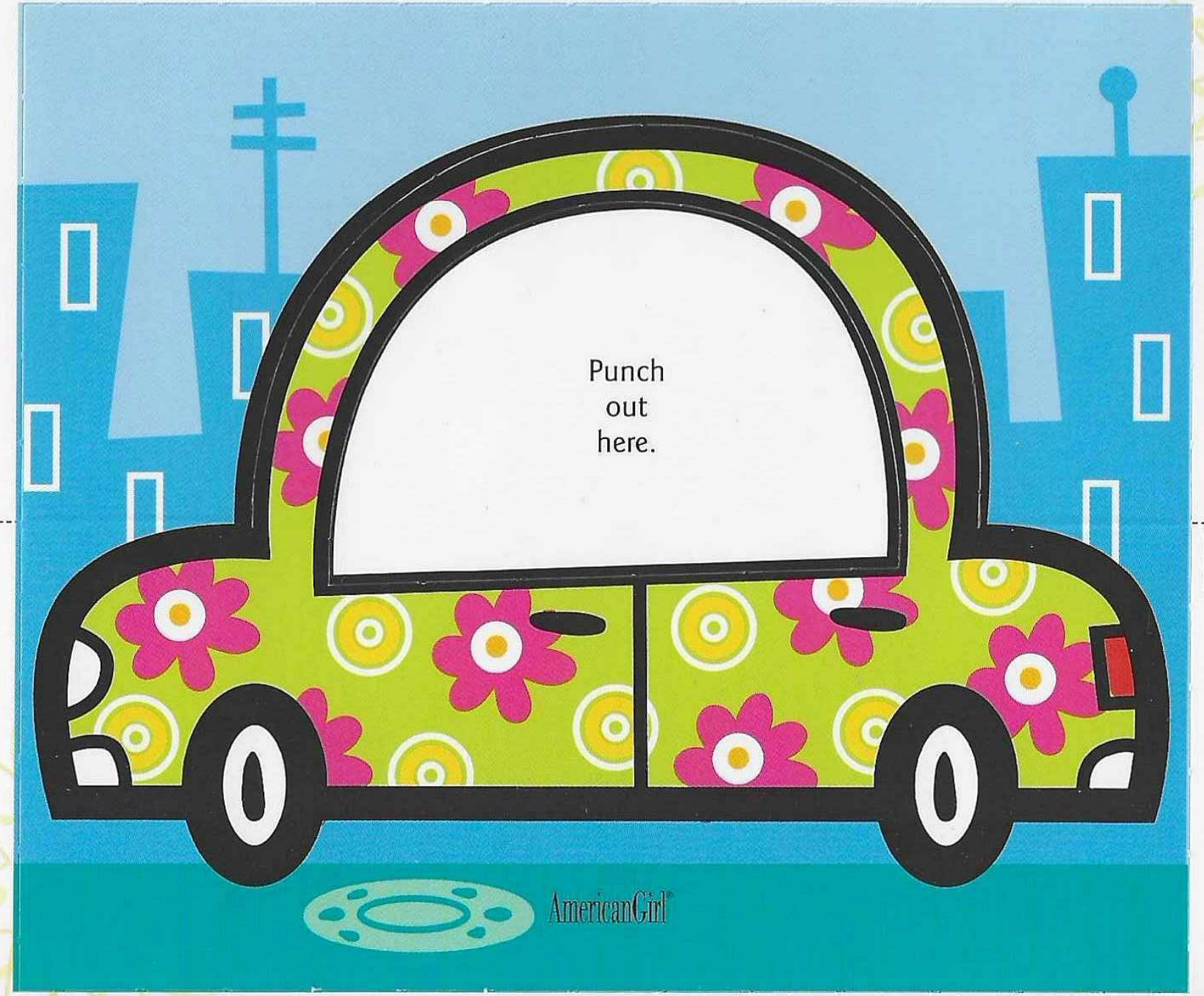
Silly Things to Say Instead of "Cheeeese!"



Fold here.

Fold here.

Photo: Mike McKenzie/Hot Shots Illustrations: Tracey Wood